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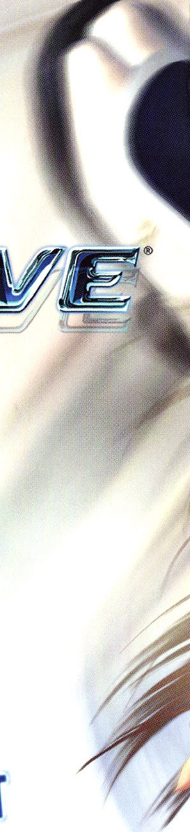
Sonic Generations • The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D • Shinobi • Mega Man Legends 3 • Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games • Cave Story 3D

268
JUNE 2011
SUBSCRIBER EDITION



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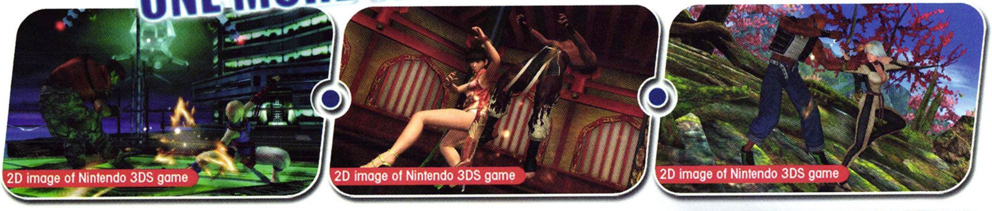
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TEEN

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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood
Mild Language
Partial Nudity
Suggestive Themes
Use of Alcohol
Violence

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Sonic fans past and present will go 'hog wild over this first look at Sonic Generations for Nintendo 3DS. Plus: Interviews, comics, a 20th-anniversary retrospective, and more!

The Greatest Moments of The Legend of Zelda: Game Boy Era 52

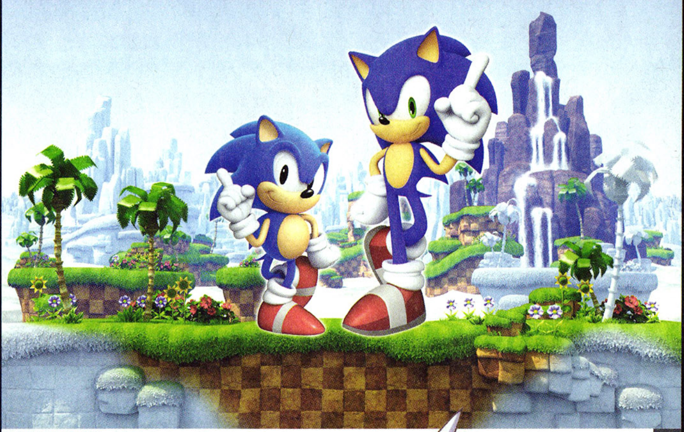
We wrap up our look back at classic Zelda games with a spotlight on The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening DX.

Back by Popular Demand 58

Because you demanded it, Mega Man Legends 3 is headed to Nintendo 3DS! We've got a hands-on report plus a look at the game's unique fan-driven creative process.

A Decade Advanced 64

Ten years later, the Game Boy Advance is still one of the greatest handhelds ever. We celebrate by picking the system's best games and other memorable highlights.



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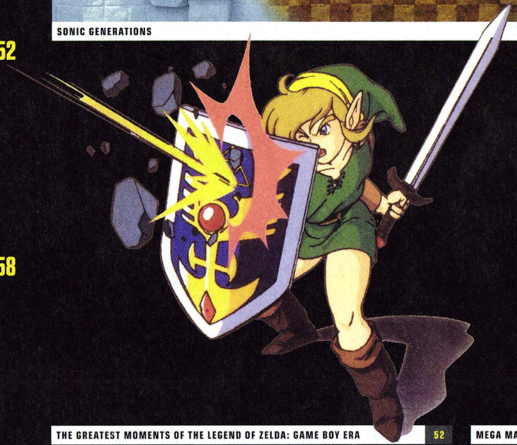

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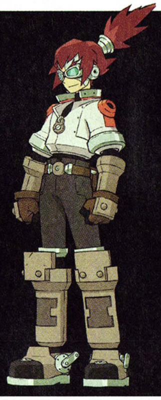

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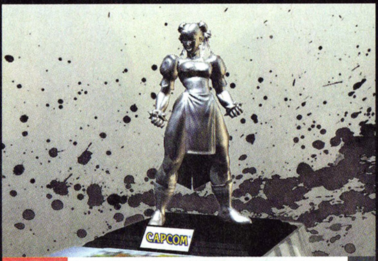

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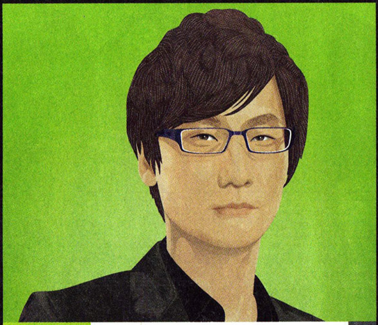

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DS = NINTENDO DS
DW = DSiWARE
GB = GAME BOY
GBA = GAME BOY ADVANCE
N3DS = NINTENDO 3DS
SNES = SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
VC = VIRTUAL CONSOLE
Wii = Wii
WW = WiiWARE

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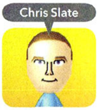
Pulse

Sonic, I Don't Hate You Anymore.



Sonic, when you first burst onto the scene bragging about blast processing, I kind of hated your guts. For me, no other platformer came close to the Super Mario series. So when some friends suddenly sided with the new Sega Genesis poster boy, I took it personally. And then when someone insisted that Sonic the Hedgehog was better than Super Mario World, I got downright angry. How could the deep, complex gameplay of a Mario masterpiece possibly be outclassed by a game that uses only three buttons *that all do the same thing*? Years later, you almost had me with Sonic Adventure and its tempting Dreamcast graphics, but the dark days of slumping sequels and countless hedgehog clone characters soon followed, and I was happy to watch you tumble from the top. But then you kept falling...and falling...and finally, when it seemed like everyone was turning against you, I couldn't help rooting for the underdog. My support must have given you a boost, because your subsequent games got better and better, from the decent Sonic Unleashed to the outstanding Sonic Colors. And I'm pleased to say that I've enjoyed your return to glory much more than your fall from grace. Happy 20th birthday, Sonic. If Mario can shake your hand at the Olympic Games, then I suppose I can, too. (Super Mario World still owns you, though.)

CHRIS SLATE **EDITOR IN CHIEF**

POKÉMON POSTER INSIDE!
TALES OF THE ABYSS FIRST NINTENDO 3DS RPG!
NINTENDO POWER
NINTENDO 3DS SECRETS
THE BEST IS BACK!
The greatest game of all time gets even better with The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D, PG. 44
future

V267 MAY 2011

Chris Slate here, back once again to answer your letters while transforming all of the Green Hill Zone critters into robots. But first, this month's special letter request: what type of game would you like to see Mario star in that he hasn't tried yet? Send your responses to the address on page 8, and we'll print the best ones!

LETTERS

Pining for Fewer Polygons

While the new graphics in The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D look epic, I kind of miss the pointy, angular style the game had back in the N64 days. There's just something stylistically awesome about the sharp edges polygonal characters had in games from that generation; it's almost like they were made out of origami paper. In video games, older technology doesn't necessarily go out of style since we still love 8-bit games and music to this day. Do you think that in 10 years or so we'll have retro-style games and t-shirt designs that borrow the N64 style of graphics? I sure hope so. **—TAPIR LORD ALEX**

Interesting point! I think that we all have a soft spot for the visual style of the games that got us started; for me it was the 8-bit sprites of the NES. It's been nice to see a resurgence of retro graphics in recent years, and there's no reason for the trend to stop. People used to demand only the most realistic visuals possible, but players' tastes have matured and broadened to the point where a wider variety of styles are accepted and encouraged, from nostalgic pixel art to the stitched-together scenery in Kirby's Epic Yarn.

Gaming Is in His Blood

The long-awaited day is drawing near when I will finally be able to purchase a Nintendo 3DS! All school year long I have been donating some lifesaving plasma for cash at a local plasma-donation center and, I've begun to set some of my earnings aside each week to put toward a Nintendo 3DS and one game—I should have enough right after finals week. (If I got the system any earlier it would distract too much from studying!) I can't wait for the remake of The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time to come out, and I really hope they will someday remake The Wind Waker, too! Sailing from island to island in 3D would be amazing! But for now, I will just have to wait in pure excitement for Ocarina of Time 3D as I purchase my new system by way of my lifesaving plasma. **—BBOB**

Show Business

You guys are so lucky—you get to go to E3! I'd do anything to go just once, but regular guys like me aren't allowed. Do you think the people who run the show will ever let the fans who drive this industry participate? **—TURTLEPOWER**

Sorry, but probably not, since E3 is still a place where people go to do business. Many of the big press conferences (including Nintendo's) are streamed live online, though, so you don't have to miss much.

Thanks for the Nintendo 3DS Expert User's Guide—I knew a lot of the stuff that was in there, but you still taught me a few new tricks. You shouldn't have given me your Mii QR codes, though...I've taken a lot of wild AR photos of you guys in some pretty crazy places. —**QR KID**

NINTENDO 3DS EXPERT USER'S GUIDE

5 FIRST THINGS TO DO

EXTRA AR GAMES AND NOVELTIES

Mii COLLECTING

Extreme Cuisine

I am concerned about the voters' choice for the creature that would make for the best meal in the Vol. 266 edition of The Score. I cannot believe that people would honestly pick grilled Cucco over a fried Cheep-Cheep! A Cucco would immediately call upon its group to viciously attack your face the moment you got close to it with a grill. Why would people risk their eyes to the talons of angry demon birds when they could be having a nonlethal meal of fried Cheep-Cheep? —**WINGEDFOX99**

I wish you had told me about the angry demon birds' talons before I tried to host my "Cuckoo for Cuccos" barbecue....

Mario's sole adventure on Isle Delfino was a memorable one.

Smooth Sailing

I know this is irrelevant since The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker hasn't been mentioned in a while, but I will belatedly defend the game's sailing sections. I thoroughly enjoyed traveling from island to island by boat. The experience heightened the sense of exploration, and braving my way through dark thunderstorms was awesome. —**LITTLEREDWOLF**

I appreciated the adventurous spirit of crossing the sea, but for me, the boat's slow speed and the need to constantly cast spells to direct the wind to your sails made traveling a chore. I love The Wind Waker and would consider it the ultimate Zelda game if only I could quickly and easily sail in any direction, and if the islands were half as far apart.

Shine On

Why haven't they made a sequel to Super Mario Sunshine, Mario's best 3D platformer? Come on: don't we all miss zipping around Delfino Plaza and running from the cops with the F.L.U.D.D. on our backs? —**SWAINER25**

What is this, GameCube Classics Month? Super Mario Sunshine isn't among my favorite Mario games, but it still beats 99% of everything else on GameCube. And I'll give you this: it's a shame that we've never gotten to aim the F.L.U.D.D.'s water spray by pointing the Wii Remote controller.

The Power of Playing Together

I am a Navy corpsman currently working on a behavioral-health unit at the hospital here in Bethesda, Maryland. I just wanted to say how appreciative I am of Nintendo's efforts to bring people of many different races and origins together socially. It has always been hard to keep behavioral-health patients happy because of all the hardships that are going on in their lives, and lately it has been even harder since we have been under construction and do not have much entertainment for them right now. One day I thought it'd be a good idea to bring in my Nintendo 64 for the patients to play with, and to my astonishment they were ecstatic to see the classics they used to love when they were children, including Star Fox 64, The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, and Super Mario 64. Nintendo provides so much fun to our unit in the hospital and their games have been a very important tool in producing a happy and social atmosphere with the patients who deeply need it in their lives. Also, one of our patients has a traumatic brain injury, and his nurse lets him use Brain Age to help with his memory and speech functions! It is amazing what Nintendo has done to help our patients who are trying to get better and go home to their families. —**TARA D.**

DON'T HASSLE THE HOFF

I am a longtime fan of the Street Fighter series, but I have one small gripe. In Street Fighter Alpha 2, Charlie is shot in the back as he fights M. Bison. He then falls into a waterfall and dies. In Street Fighter Alpha 3, he is back as a playable character. Then comes the above-awesome Super Street Fighter IV 3D. According to Guile's story, Charlie is—yep, you guessed it—deceased once more. So, Capcom, on behalf of Charlie's fans worldwide, please, oh please, *make up your mind about Charlie.* —**BRANDON L.**

The Hoff says: According to Capcom's Seth Killian, "Charlie's endings in the Street Fighter Alpha games are non-canonical." But don't be fooled; in truth, Charlie is actually a zombie! C'mon—no living person would wear his hair like that! Besides, Street Fighter Alpha 2 hit the same year as Resident Evil. Coincidence? I think not! The next time Guile visits Charlie's grave, he might wind up as a snack!

First impression: I was floored by how much there was to do built-in. Second impression: I like the Circle Pad so much, I hope they put it on a console controller. Third impression.... Hold on; I need to go put it on the cradle to charge. **—ALT**

What are your impressions of the Nintendo 3DS handheld?

Ever since I tried one at a pod in Chicago, my sights were set on getting a Nintendo 3DS. With it, I've amazed friends with glasses-free 3D, and my friend's system even got him a kiss from the girl of his dreams. What other handheld has ever done all that? **—BRETT W.**

When I got the Nintendo 3DS, I was amazed by the graphics and 3D effects. I enjoyed playing the built-in software with my friends, especially the AR games. I only have one thing to complain about: what happened to PictoChat?! **—HUNTER S.**

Right out of the box I was having fun combining pictures of people's faces with the system's 3D camera. After looking at my brother's face mixed with his wife's, I couldn't erase the impression that their kid will come out looking like a chubby Neanderthal. Man, I can't wait until that kid grows up! **—KAO THE KANGAROO**

The Nintendo 3DS is a great addition to the Nintendo family, with amazing graphics and games. The 3D ain't too shabby, either, in comparison to 3D technology that requires 3D glasses. My only complaints are that the system took the spotlight away from Wii, which has been left hanging, and that the battery could use about 50% more power. But overall it is a fine system that beats anything else out there. **—SORA4WII**

I got my Nintendo 3DS the day it came out, and it's awesome! The Circle Pad, 3D effects, and improved graphics (which rival those found on Wii) are a great way to start the fifth generation of handheld Nintendo gaming. The system even lets you play those "old-fashioned" DS games. The only other thing I would like to have seen would be a slot for GBA games, which I guess are now officially considered to be collector's items. **—VILE MALMORT**

I've owned every Nintendo console and handheld since the N64 and GBA, and I've never experienced something as amazing as the Nintendo 3DS! I can only hope that developers take full advantage of the otherworldly 3D effects the system has to offer and continue to remake the masterpieces that I played as a kid. The glory days of Nintendo 64 gaming are finally making their return, in 3D! **—SUPERNINTENBOY**

When I learned that Super Street Fighter IV 3D would be a launch title for the Nintendo 3DS, I almost died from excitement. So you can imagine my reaction when Dead or Alive Dimensions, BlazBlue: Continuum Shift II, and even Cartoon Network Punch Time Explosion were announced to be released shortly afterward. For fighting-game fans, the N3DS might just be the best Nintendo system yet. **—RHADAMANTHUS**

Playing the Nintendo 3DS is like riding down the mountain of joy on a unicorn while drinking the laughter of children from a golden goblet. **—ROFLPLATYPUS**

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Don't send links to game coverage on the Web—trust us; we see it all.

Don't ask about the status of upcoming games, or whether certain games will be announced; if we have that info, we'll always tell you.

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What Nintendo fans think, want, and do

The SCORE

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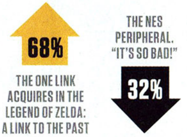
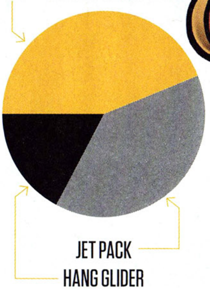


FIFTY-THREE

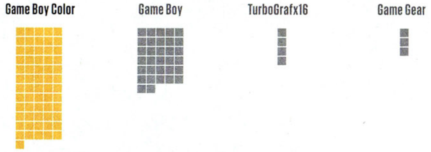
PERCENT OF YOU PLAY HORROR GAMES WITH THE LIGHTS OFF

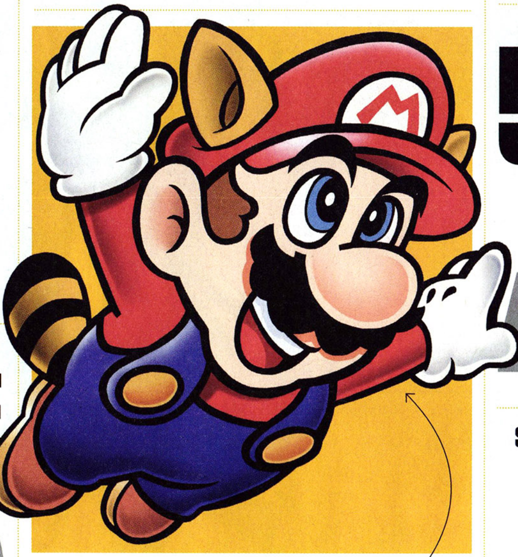
BEST PILOTWINGS VEHICLE?

PLANE



WHICH NINTENDO 3DS VIRTUAL CONSOLE GAME LIBRARY ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO PLAYING?



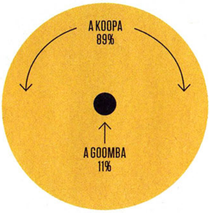


THE BEST WAY TO FLY IS BY

RACCOON TAIL

Raccoon Tail 46% · Magic Cape 34% · Winged Hat 34%

WHICH BOWSER LACKEY WOULD YOU BE?



I HOARD THEM

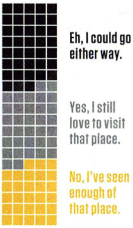
58%

RPG ITEMS

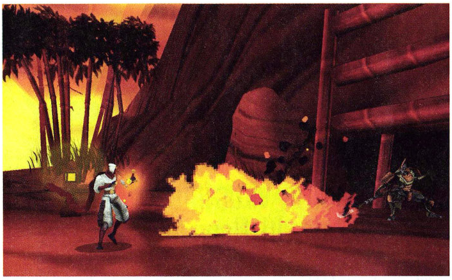
I USE THEM FREQUENTLY

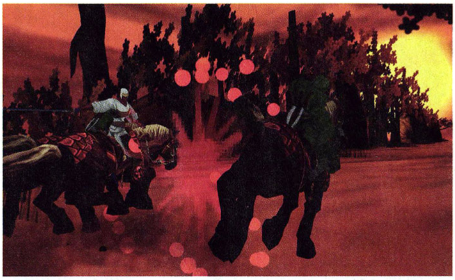
42%

SHOULD WUHU ISLAND RETURN IN FUTURE GAMES?



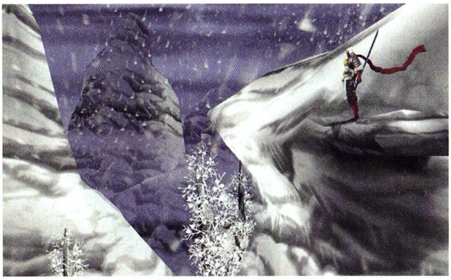
POWER UP

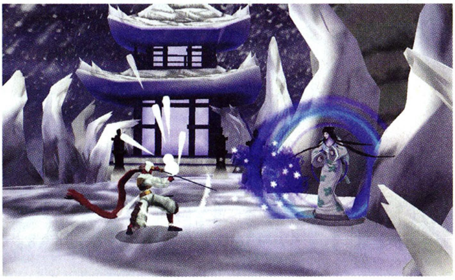




The Next Generation of Ninja

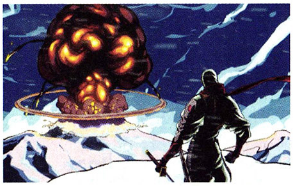
The original in-your-face ninja action game is back! **Shinobi** is headed to Nintendo 3DS.





IT'S PRETTY MUCH an indisputable fact: there's nothing cooler than being a ninja. Which means that in 1987, there were few video games cooler than Shinobi, a Sega arcade title that put you in the role of shuriken-throwing, hostage-rescuing ninja Joe Musashi. Since then, the series has had its highs (such as The Revenge of Shinobi for Sega Genesis, currently available on Virtual Console) and lows, but in recent years it's faded into the shadows. (Ninjas tend to do that.) This September, however, Shinobi will reemerge when Sega releases an all-new series entry for the Nintendo 3DS handheld.

Simply titled Shinobi, the N3DS title is a 2.5D side-scroller packed with more intense action than you can shake a kusarigama at. Controlling a new ninja hero (Sega declined to mention the character's name), you'll slice through enemies with katana strikes (including combo attacks that juggle your foes in the air); smite bad guys from afar with an auto-recharging supply of kunai (throwing knives); and blast adversaries with fire, water, lightning, and shadow magic. Double jumps and evasive slide attacks will demonstrate the hero's agility, a grappling hook will get him to high places, and, like any good ninja, he can wall-jump and swing hand-over-hand from the ceiling. Defense is important, too; by pressing R you'll be able to parry enemy attacks, but the move is integrated so smoothly into your repertoire that there's never a lull in the action; you can even defend against attacks that come at you from behind or while you're jumping.



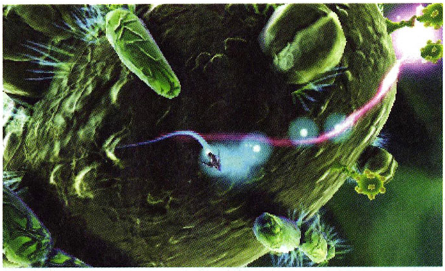
Wherever he goes, the hero of Shinobi leaves huge mushroom clouds in his wake. Just like Chuck Norris.

The game begins when your home, Oboro Village, falls under attack by mysterious enemy forces. As you run through burning temples and cross collapsing bridges, you'll face enemy ninjas and samurai while buildings crumble in the background and explosions rock the once-serene landscape. From there, you'll fight on horseback while rushing through a forest (tip: horses and fallen trees don't mix), survive an ambush while riding a raft down a raging river, climb a waterfall by jumping from falling logs, explore caves and snowcapped mountains, and battle an elegant female warrior who can disappear in a puff of black smoke—and that's all just on the first level! Later stages promise to get even crazier: you'll fight on the back of a moving jet in an homage to Sega's classic arcade hit Afterburner, and you'll duel a giant cyborg megalodon shark. If a ninja-vs.-shark showdown isn't cool, we don't know what is.

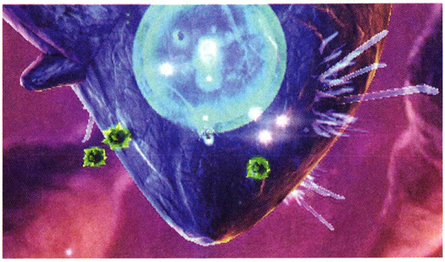
Other features include a 3D shuriken-throwing minigame inspired by the original Shinobi, bonus content that's unlocked by completing specific in-game challenges, the ability to save your level playthroughs and share them with other players, and some form of StreetPass compatibility. Shinobi is being developed by Washington-based Griptonite Games. **—CHRIS H.**

Honey, I Shrunk the Shooter

The Nanostray virus infects Nintendo 3DS this fall with Nano Assault.



Shin'en certainly has a knack for squeezing the most out of hardware.



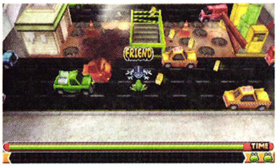
PUBLISHER MAJESCO and developer Shin'en, makers of the lauded Nanostray and Nanostray 2 for DS, have joined forces to bring their electron-microscope-inspired shooter series to the Nintendo 3DS this November as Nano Assault. The game makers will focus heavily on transitioning their acclaimed graphic motif to 3D grandeur, but—not surprisingly—Majesco promises series fans more than a facelift.

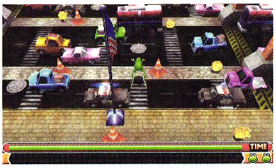
Nano Assault casts you as the pilot of a Nanite vessel battling the cellular minions of the Nanostray virus. Naturally, fighting alien infections requires an assortment of beam, projectile, and explosive weaponry, and all will be offered in abundance, along with secondary weapons earned by defeating bosses. Play spreads across 32 stages that adjust in difficulty to match the skill of the player.

Special features designed to fortify value and exploit the unique tech of the N3DS include an unlockable Missions mode, in which you maximize your score within a set amount of time; a detailed encyclopedia of unlockable enemy data, complete with strategies to defeat specific baddies; and a StreetPass feature that allows high-scorers to accumulate medals and bonus items. **—PATRICK C.**

New Frog, Old Tricks

Not to be left out of this year's anniversary craze, Konami will commemorate three decades of Frogger with a brand new installment for the Nintendo 3DS handheld. Imaginatively entitled Frogger 3D, the game takes the franchise back to its arcade roots, tasking you with safely maneuvering our web-footed hero from one side of the screen to the other. This version throws in a few twists along the way, but the core experience should seem familiar to anyone who remembers the original quarter-muncher.





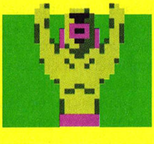
NEED FOR SPEED
THE RUN
EA

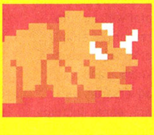
Need More Need for Speed?

EA's upcoming Need for Speed: The Run will be furnished for Wii and N3DS by developer (and racing-game specialist) Firebrand Games this November. This installment of the long-running series focuses on a coast-to-coast race from San Francisco to New York, and will feature natural and urban environments...at 200 mph.

A WINNER IS...

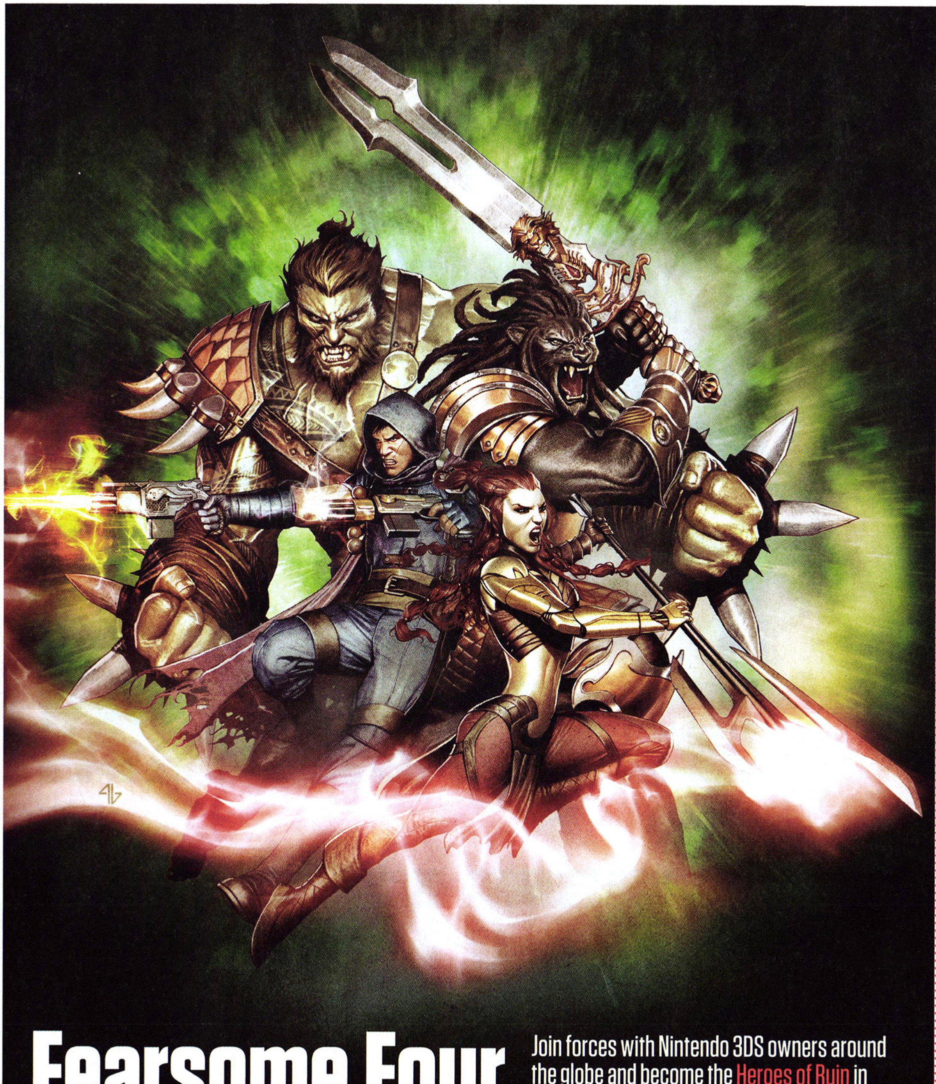
Video game anniversary celebrations.





DODONGO DISLIKES...

The seemingly endless wait for E3.



Fearsome Four

Join forces with Nintendo 3DS owners around the globe and become the Heroes of Ruin in Square Enix's new four-player online adventure.

SQUARE ENIX and developer n-Space are teaming up for one of the most ambitious online offerings on the Nintendo 3DS to date. Called Heroes of Ruin, it's a completely original effort that supports drop-in/drop-out cooperative play for up to four participants anywhere in the world. Each player will create a mercenary from one of four diverse classes, then customize him or her with new weapons, armor, and class abilities earned throughout a story-driven quest. The game supports real-time chat via the built-in microphone and will offer new content—including daily challenges—through SpotPass. We'll have much more on Heroes of Ruin in next month's issue. **—STEVE T.**

STAR POWER

A closer look at the characters we love

FIRST APPEARANCE:
NINJA GAIDEN
ARCADE, 1988

Ryu Hayabusa

Whether he's battling a resurrected demon or chilling with bikini models, Ryu makes being a ninja look easy.

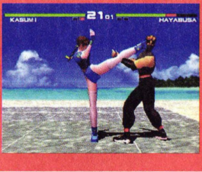
CAREER GRAPH

HIGH POINTS

1989
While in the US, Ryu meets a nice girl...

1990
Ryu's Dragon Sword revives Irene.

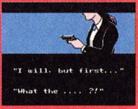
1996
Tired of dealing with a girl who keeps dying, Ryu enters a fighting tournament that features plenty of hot babes.



LOW POINTS

1989
Ryu's father is killed, sending him on a journey to the US to seek revenge.

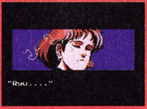
1989
...who promptly shoots him.



"I will, but first..."

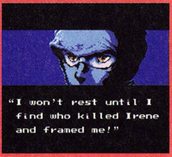
"What the .... ?!"

1990
Irene, Ryu's gun-toting girlfriend, is killed by the evil Jaquio.



"Ryu...."

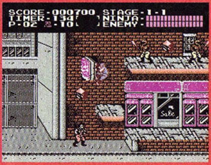
1991
Ryu is framed when his evil clone seemingly kills Irene.



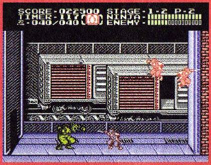
"I won't rest until I find who killed Irene and framed me!"

2008
Ryu's father is killed, sending him on a journey to the US to seek revenge. Again.

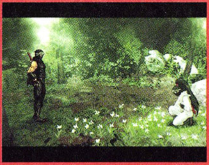
OUR FAVORITE RYU HAYABUSA GAMES



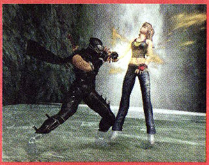
Ninja Gaiden
NES, 1989
At the time of this game's release, cut-scenes were not a common element of gaming. The extensive story sequences in Ninja Gaiden introduced us to Ryu's world, which was filled with intrigue, action, double crosses, and demons.



Ninja Gaiden II: The Dark Sword of Chaos
NES, 1990
This sequel not only improved the already fantastic gameplay, but it introduced new villains and plot twists. To combat the added threat, Ryu gained the ability to create shadow duplicates of himself that fight alongside him.



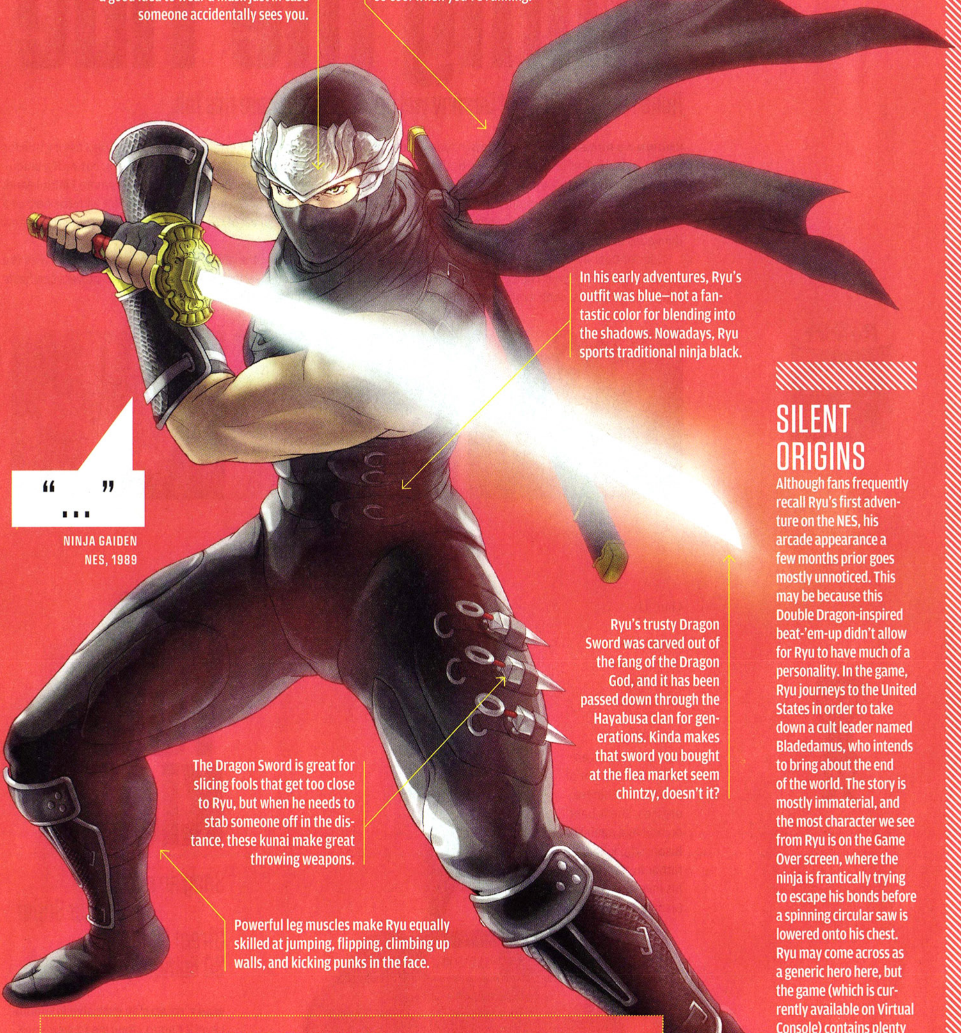
Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword
NINTENDO DS, 2008
After a long absence, Ryu finally returned to a Nintendo system with this touch-screen-driven adventure. According to Tecmo's official timeline, this game serves as a prequel to the three NES Ninja Gaiden titles.



Dead or Alive Dimensions
NINTENDO 3DS, 2011
Ryu has been a staple of the Dead or Alive fighting games series since its debut in 1996. In this latest installment, Ryu returns for a 3D brawl. The game's story mode reveals more about Ryu's relationship with the other DOA fighters.

Ninjas are supposed to be a pretty secretive group of fighters. As such, it's usually a good idea to wear a mask just in case someone accidentally sees you.

A scarf may not be the most appropriate accessory for a ninja, but dang it—*it looks so cool when you're running!*



In his early adventures, Ryu's outfit was blue—not a fantastic color for blending into the shadows. Nowadays, Ryu sports traditional ninja black.

“ ”
...

NINJA GAIDEN
NES, 1989

Ryu's trusty Dragon Sword was carved out of the fang of the Dragon God, and it has been passed down through the Hayabusa clan for generations. Kinda makes that sword you bought at the flea market seem chintzy, doesn't it?

The Dragon Sword is great for slicing fools that get too close to Ryu, but when he needs to stab someone off in the distance, these kunai make great throwing weapons.

Powerful leg muscles make Ryu equally skilled at jumping, flipping, climbing up walls, and kicking punks in the face.

SILENT ORIGINS

Although fans frequently recall Ryu's first adventure on the NES, his arcade appearance a few months prior goes mostly unnoticed. This may be because this Double Dragon-inspired beat-'em-up didn't allow for Ryu to have much of a personality. In the game, Ryu journeys to the United States in order to take down a cult leader named Bladedamus, who intends to bring about the end of the world. The story is mostly immaterial, and the most character we see from Ryu is on the Game Over screen, where the ninja is frantically trying to escape his bonds before a spinning circular saw is lowered onto his chest. Ryu may come across as a generic hero here, but the game (which is currently available on Virtual Console) contains plenty of action.

His name is
"Ryu Hayabusa"

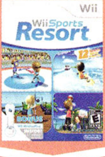
RYU TAKES OVER

In a strange twist, Ryu's lone appearance on the Game Boy wasn't even originally a Ninja Gaiden game. The game that we know as Ninja Gaiden Shadow (released in 1991) was originally planned to be a portable version of Natsume's NES game Shadow of the Ninja. How tough is Ryu Hayabusa? He pretty much stormed in at the last minute and made it his own game. No rival ninja is safe from Ryu.

POWER QUIZ

EASY

Where does Wii Sports Resort take place?

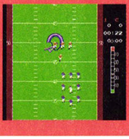


AVERAGE

What famous boxer starred in the original 1987 release of Punch-Out!! for the NES?

HARDCORE

What was the name of the Nintendo-published football game that was released at the launch of the NES?



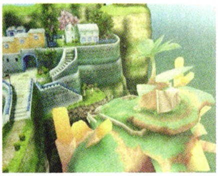
ANSWERS EASY: Wuhu Island; AVERAGE: Mike Tyson; HARDCORE: 10-Yard Fight

Tilling the Tide

Rune Factory: Tides of Destiny will be washing ashore this fall.

KNOWN AS RUNE FACTORY: OCEANS in Japan, Tides of Destiny is Marvelous Entertainment's second Rune Factory title for the Wii console. This installment features the series's trademark mix of farming, questing, and romance, but with a unique oceanic twist. Afflicted with a strange curse, heroes Azel and Sonia find themselves transported to remote Finith Island, a small but charming community surrounded by what seems to be endless ocean in every direction. But with the help of a giant golem named Ymir, they can find over 30 sunken islands and lift them off of the ocean floor, providing plenty of new dungeons to explore, monsters to battle, and fields to till.

Tides of Destiny introduces the option to play as a female character and the ability to bear and raise children with the romantic partner of your choice (both firsts for the previously dude-centric series). Between adventures players can farm, fish, raise monsters, cook, craft items, and compete in a variety of annual festivals. —**CASEY L.**



Get Your Kicks

Snag an exclusive Level 7 Chun-Li figurine for Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition.

Name:
Chun-Li
Stats:
Attack: 135
Defense: 114
Super Bar: 4
Ultra Bar: 0
Description:
This Interpol detective wears an outfit reminiscent of traditional Chinese dresses. She is bent on revenge against Bison, who killed her father in retaliation for his investigation into Bison's drug trade.

CAPCOM
ACTION FIGURE

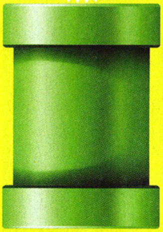
NINTENDO POWER
Platinum Level 7
Chun-Li:
hjekwnEbxG
EXCLUSIVE!

WANT TO ADD an exclusive Platinum Level 7 Chun-Li figurine to your copy of Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition for Nintendo 3DS? Of course you do. To do so, fire up your copy of the game, enter the Figure Collection mode, select the Password option, and enter hjekwnEbxG (note that it's case-sensitive). That's all there is to it; you now have the ultimate version of Street Fighter's leading lady!

WARP ZONE

What we were writing about way back when

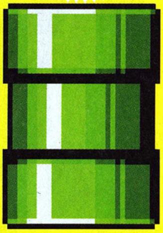
5 YEARS AGO



THE TONY HAWK REVOLUTION
NINTENDO POWER
NEW SUPER MARIO BROS.
WORLD EXCLUSIVE!
Castlevania
Portrait of Ruin
A Nintendo DS masterpiece in the making!

The June 2006 issue was kinda weird. Not only did it feature an interview with Yoot Saito (creator of Odama, one of the strangest games ever) and a discussion about pantsless monkeys, but it contained photos of an NP dance-off. On the other hand, the cover story—an exclusive reveal of Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin—was pretty normal (in an awesome sort of way), as was the feature on the top moments of New Super Mario Bros. for DS. Fun fact: The headline for the Castlevania article was originally planned to be New Blood.

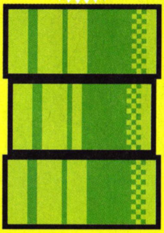
10 YEARS AGO

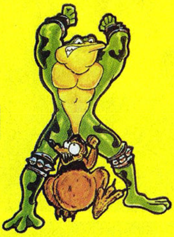


WORLD
SCORE

Coinciding with the release of the Game Boy Advance, many of the articles in the June 2001 issue of Nintendo Power focused on GBA launch titles such as Super Mario Advance, F-Zero: Maximum Velocity, and Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2. The highest-rated GBA launch game was Rayman Advance; believe it or not, Super Mario Advance scored only a 3.5 out of 5. In addition, the issue contained first looks at soon-to-be-GameCube-classics, including Pikmin and Super Smash Bros. Melee.

20 YEARS AGO





Contemporary gamers might not be familiar with the Battletoads, but in June 1991 these warty warriors were all the rage on the NES. And by "rage," we mean the fury you'd feel due to the game's insane difficulty—this brawler was incredibly tough (but also a lot of fun). Fortunately, Nintendo Power's ludicrously huge 36-page cover story contained maps and tips for the entire game, as well as a comic strip. The issue also featured the landmark debut of the Super NES.

NINTENDO DS
SOLITAIRE OVERLOAD PLUS
101 Mahjong
202 Solitaire
303 Tangram
101 Picture Puzzles
ALMOST UNLIMITED PLAY!
TELEGAMES
ULTIMATE PUZZLE GAMES
Sudoku Edition
Unlimited puzzles!
9 x 9 Grids
8 x 8 Grids
6 x 6 Grids
4 x 4 Grids
Sudoku Solver
Difficulty Levels
Great 2 Player Modes
plus......GAME SHARE!
TELEGAMES
SOLITAIRE OVERLOAD
101 GAMES
FreeCell • Klondike • Golf
Pyramid • Yukon • Spider
...and 95 more games!
OU MASTER THEM ALL?
TELEGAMES

Virtually Unlimited Entertainment

NOW available for iPad

All Games Designed with VUE™ Technology

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AVAILABLE AT

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COLLECTOR'S CORNER

SERIOUSLY COOL STUFF FOR SERIOUS NINTENDO FANS

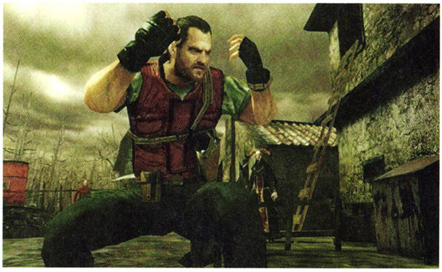
Puppy Power

Chibiterasu: supercute or *supercutest*? We don't know the answer to that question, but we do know that any fan of Capcom's Okamiden will howl with delight at these plush and pillow versions of the adorable wolf god.

Oh, Yeah!!

Based on THQ's WWE All Stars game, Mattel has released a trio of Toys "R" Us-exclusive legend vs. superstar action-figure two-packs: Jake "The Snake" Roberts vs. Randy Orton, "Stone Cold" Steve Austin vs. CM Punk, and "Macho Man" Randy Savage vs. John Morrison. Each set includes a secret code for use in the game.

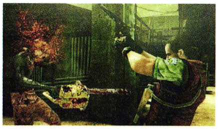
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK MADEO

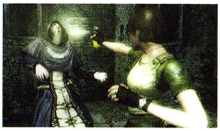


The Bird and the Beard

A pair of original survivors make their long-awaited return in Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D.

WITH THE RELEASE of M-rated Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D only a few weeks away, Capcom has finally revealed the game's last two playable characters: Resident Evil Zero star Rebecca Chambers and the original Resident Evil's bearded Adonis, Barry Burton. Another interesting note: in the screenshot below, Rebecca appears to be turning some sort of aerosol spray against her foes, suggesting she has access to a new chemical weapon along the lines of the Pesticide Spray in the Outbreak spinoff series. Or it could just be Barry's misplaced supply of Beard-in-a-Can, explaining why his formerly majestic whiskers are looking a tad thin in this installment. —**CASEY L.**



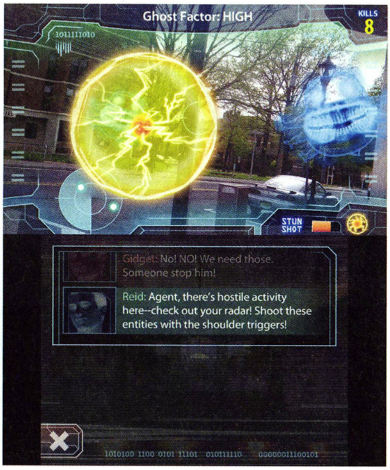


New Console Coming

Nintendo president Satoru Iwata officially announced that the company will unveil a new home video game console at this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles on June 7th. Details remain scarce at the time of this writing, but the company expects to release the system some time in 2012. Nintendo will livestream the E3 presentation at e3.nintendo.com, and we'll have a full report from the show floor in next month's issue.

Frights and Bites

In addition to prepping Nano Assault (see page 12), Majesco is throwing its support behind the Nintendo 3DS with two other titles slated for release this fall: The Hidden and Jaws. Augmented-reality game The Hidden has you using the handheld's camera in order to hunt for supernatural beings in the world around you. In Jaws (which is also coming to the Wii console), you play as the infamous killer shark, chomping on armed humans and lethal sea creatures alike.



Gidget: No! NO! We need those. Someone stop him!

Reid: Agent, there's hostile activity here--check out your radar! Shoot these entities with the shoulder triggers!

Wii
MARIOKART
Wii

Price-Drop Alert

Nintendo recently released a new Wii hardware bundle for the reduced price of $149.99. The package includes a black or white Wii console, a matching Wii Remote Plus controller, and a Nunchuk controller, Wii Wheel accessory, and Mario Kart Wii. The company also launched a new Nintendo Selects collection for Wii, allowing you to pick up The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess, Animal Crossing: City Folk, Mario Super Sluggers, and Wii Sports for just $19.99 each.

GAME FORECAST

READERS' MOST WANTED

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Wii

1. The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword
2. Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games
3. The Grinder
4. Spider-Man: Edge of Time
5. Cartoon Network Punch Time Explosion

NINTENDO DS

1. Harvest Moon: The Tale of Two Towns
2. Spider-Man: Edge of Time
3. Phineas and Ferb: Across the 2nd Dimension
4. Captain America: Super Soldier
5. X-Men: Destiny

NINTENDO 3DS

1. Super Mario*
2. Mario Kart*
3. Paper Mario*
4. Kid Icarus: Uprising
5. Star Fox 64 3D

Wii

Captain America: Super Soldier	Sega	7/11
Cars 2: The Video Game	Disney	SUM 11
Cartoon Network Punch Time Explosion	Crave	HOL 11
Centipede: Infestation	Atari	FALL 11
Driver San Francisco	Ubisoft	8/11
Family Game Night 4: The Game Show	Electronic Arts	FALL 11
Generator Rex: Agent of Providence	Activision	FALL 11
The Grinder	TBA	TBA
Hard Grip: The Climbing Game	TBA	TBA
Jaws	Majesco	FALL 11
Jimmie Johnson's Anything with an Engine	Autumn	2011
The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword	Nintendo	2011
Madden NFL 12	Electronic Arts	8/11
Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games	Sega	TBA
Mystery Case Files: The Malgrave Incident	Nintendo	6/11
NCIS	Ubisoft	2011
Need for Speed: The Run	Electronic Arts	11/11
Phineas and Ferb: Across the 2nd Dimension	Disney	SUM 11
Pyroblazer	TBA	TBA
Rune Factory: Tides of Destiny	Natsume	FALL 11
Sesame Street: Ready, Set, Grover!	Warner Bros.	SUM 11
Sky Pirates of Neo Terra	Aspyr	TBA
Skylanders: Spyro's Adventure	Activision	Q3 11
The Smurfs	Ubisoft	8/11
Spider-Man: Edge of Time	Activision	FALL 11
Stratusphere	TBA	TBA
X-Men: Destiny	Activision	2011
Zumba Fitness 2	Majesco	11/11

NINTENDO DS

Captain America: Super Soldier	Sega	7/11
Cars 2: The Video Game	Disney	SUM 11
Doodle Hex	TBA	TBA
Generator Rex: Agent of Providence	Activision	FALL 11
Ghostwire: Link to the Paranormal	TBA	TBA
Harvest Moon: The Tale of Two Towns	Natsume	2011
Hollywood Files	Easy	6/11
NCIS	Ubisoft	2011
Pirate Battle	Orbital Media	TBA
Phineas and Ferb: Across the 2nd Dimension	Disney	SUM 11
Sesame Street: Ready, Set, Grover!	Warner Bros.	SUM 11
The Smurfs	Ubisoft	8/11
Spider-Man: Edge of Time	Activision	FALL 11
X-Men: Destiny	Activision	2011

NINTENDO 3DS

Animal Crossing*	Nintendo	TBA
Assassin's Creed: Lost Legacy	Ubisoft	TBA
Baseball*	Konami	TBA
Batman*	Warner Bros.	TBA
Bit.Trip Saga	Aksys	TBA
BloodRayne: The Shroud	Majesco	TBA
Bokujyoumonogatari 3D*	Marvelous	TBA
A Boy and His Blob	Majesco	TBA
Brunswick Pro Bowling	Crave	TBA
Captain America: Super Soldier	Sega	TBA
Carnival Games*	Take-Two	TBA
Cave Story 3D	NIS America	8/11
Centipede: Infestation	Atari	FALL 11
Chocobo Racing 3D*	Square Enix	TBA
Contra*	Konami	TBA
Crash-City GP	Rocket	TBA
Crush 3D	Sega	2011
de Blob 2	THQ	TBA
DJ Hero 3D	Activision	TBA
Doctor Lautrec and the Forgotten Knights	Konami	SUM 11
Dragon Ball*	Namco Bandai	TBA
Dragon Quest*	Square Enix	TBA
Dream Trigger 3D	D3Publisher	SPR 11
Driver Renegade	Ubisoft	9/11
Dynasty Warriors*	Tecmo Koei	TBA
Etrian Odyssey*	Atlus	TBA
Face Racers: Photo Finish	Majesco	9/11
FIFA 12	Electronic Arts	FALL 11
Final Fantasy*	Square Enix	TBA
Frogger 3D	Konami	FALL 11
Gabrielle's Ghostly Groove 3D	Natsume	SUM 11
Generator Rex: Agent of Providence	Activision	FALL 11
Gundam*	Namco Bandai	TBA
Harvest Moon: The Tale of Two Towns	Natsume	2011
Heroes of Ruin	Square Enix	2012
The Hidden	Majesco	10/11
James Noir's Hollywood Crimes	Ubisoft	FALL 11
Jaws	Majesco	FALL 11
Kid Icarus: Uprising	Nintendo	2011
Kingdom Hearts: Dream Drop Distance	Square Enix	TBA
Kung Fu Panda: Kaboom of Doom	THQ	TBA
Lion's Pride: Adventures in the Serengeti	Majesco	TBA
Lovely Lisa 3D	Tomy	TBA
Mahjong Cub3D	Atlus	SUM 11
Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games	Sega	TBA
Mario Kart*	Nintendo	TBA
Martha Stewart	Majesco	TBA
Marvel Super Hero Squad: The Infinity Gauntlet	THQ	SUM 11
Mega Man Legends 3	Capcom	TBA
Metal Gear Solid: Snake Eater 3D	Konami	TBA
Nano Assault	Majesco	11/11
Naruto Shippuden Action*	Tomy	TBA
Need for Speed: The Run	Electronic Arts	11/11
Ninja Gaiden*	Tecmo Koei	TBA
Paper Mario*	Nintendo	TBA
The Penguins of Madagascar	THQ	TBA
Pet Zombies	Majesco	9/11
Petz Fantasy 3D	Ubisoft	6/11
Professor Layton and the Mask of Miracle*	Level-5	TBA
Puss N Boots	THQ	TBA
Reel Fishing Paradise 3D	Natsume	6/11
Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D	Capcom	6/11
Resident Evil: Revelations	Capcom	TBA
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Survivor Overclocked	Atlus	2011
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona*	Atlus	TBA
Shinobi	Sega	9/11
Sonic Generations	Sega	HOL 11
Spider-Man: Edge of Time	Activision	FALL 11
Star Fox 64 3D	Nintendo	2011
Sudoku Premier Edition	Majesco	TBA
Super Mario*	Nintendo	TBA
Super Robot*	Namco Bandai	TBA
Tales of the Abyss	Namco Bandai	FALL 11
Thor: God of Thunder	Sega	TBA
VS-robo	Rocket	TBA
WonderWorld Amusement Park	Majesco	TBA
Zoo Resort	Ubisoft	6/11

RED TEXT = TITLES ADDED THIS MONTH. * TENTATIVE TITLE **NOTE:** RELEASE DATES OFTEN CHANGE.

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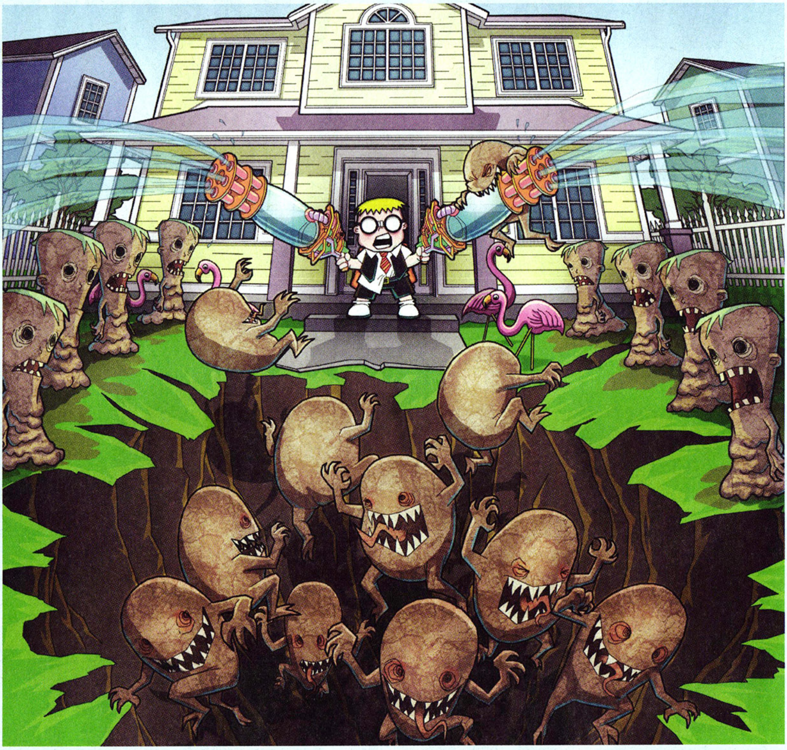
GO SERIES CAPTAIN SUB
IKIBAGO
SLINGO QUEST
UBONGO

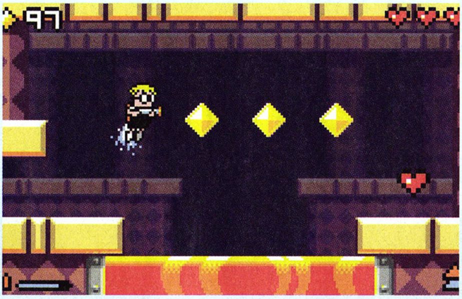


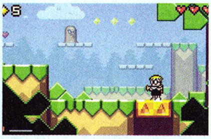
Down and Dirty

Mutant Mudds are invading the Nintendo eShop! It's time for a hero who doesn't muck around.

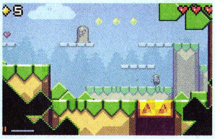
HOW'S THIS FOR irony? Renegade Kid—a studio renowned for pulling off some of the best 3D visuals on the original Nintendo DS system—is bringing its talents to the Nintendo 3DS handheld with...a 2D side-scroller. What's more, the game in question started life as a 3D platformer for DSiWare.

Back then, it was called Maximilian and the Rise of the Mutant Mudds, but Renegade Kid couldn't find a publisher for the project and decided to put it on





At certain points in the game, Max can move from the foreground [above] to the background [below].



the shelf. Fast-forward to our exclusive unveiling of the game now known simply as Mutant Mudds. The developer has decided to self-publish the title in its new form, and the jump from 3D to 2D stems from a lifelong ambition of the studio's co-founder and creative director, Jools Watsham. "I've always wanted to design a 2D platformer," Watsham explains. "One day I started tinkering around with a pixel adaptation of Max, just for fun, and to my surprise, something not entirely awful was born. Max looked pretty snappy in his pixel form." Watsham and his team had also been experimenting with a 2D platformer for consoles at the time, but when the Nintendo 3DS was announced, they quickly decided to adapt that work to Mutant Mudds for Nintendo's new handheld. "I love the N3DS," proclaims Watsham. "It has everything I could want, as a player and a developer."

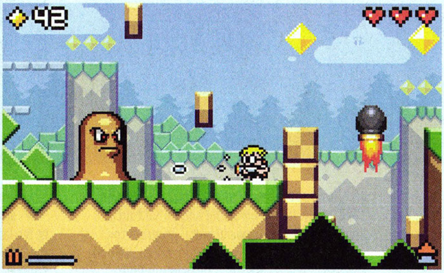
Slated for late 2011, the game revolves around a bid by its titular monsters to conquer Max's world. They rise up from the earth and take a number of different forms, each with unique abilities. To put a stop to this grimy invasion, Max wields a heavy-duty water cannon (don't call it a squirt gun), as well as an H2O-powered jetpack that he can use to fly and hover for short periods of time. Though he's now a 2D sprite, our hero can take advantage of the third dimension by jetting between the background and the foreground. Watsham compares the corresponding visual effect to that of Wario Land for the Virtual Boy, adding, "Beyond the 'neato factor,' which admittedly will wear off eventually, we've designed some really cool platform puzzles that I think players will enjoy from a challenging gameplay perspective."

Max's primary objective in each level is to collect the mighty Water Sprites, which are the only force capable of ultimately vanquishing the Mutant Mudds. Along the way, however, he can complete side objectives to unlock secret levels and special power-ups. The latter include increased power and range for Max's water cannon and a vertical boost for his jetpack. According to Watsham, "The power-ups are designed to indulge the more adventurous and skilled players out there who want to explore every corner of the world and unlock every secret."

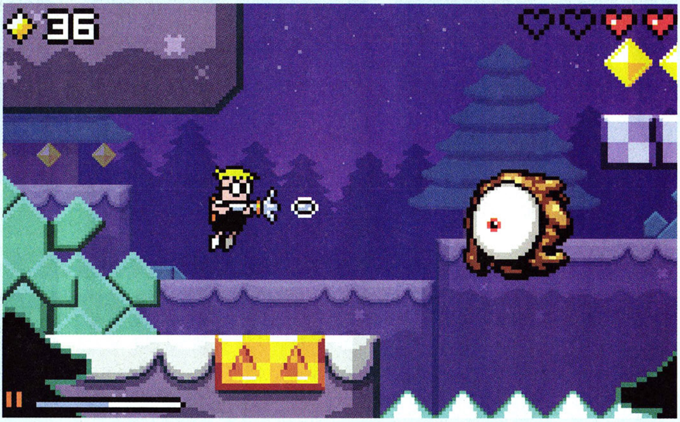
At the same time, Watsham wants to cater to the pick-up-and-play nature of mobile gaming by ensuring that players can "dip in for a few minutes of fun when [they] have only a few to spare." That means a simple, menu-driven structure that provides quick access to a variety of levels. You'll still have to earn your progress, however, as each world in the game requires you to collect a certain number of Water Sprites before you can enter. It's akin to the stars in Super Mario 64; the more you accumulate, the more levels you can access. Watsham says the team also has plans to offer additional worlds as downloadable content.

Given previous gems like WayForward's Shantae, we're always excited to see what a talented developer can accomplish when left to its own devices. "[Self-publishing] is incredibly liberating," enthuses Watsham. "Being able to make what we want because we want to is simply a beautiful thing. Viva eShop!"

—STEVE T.

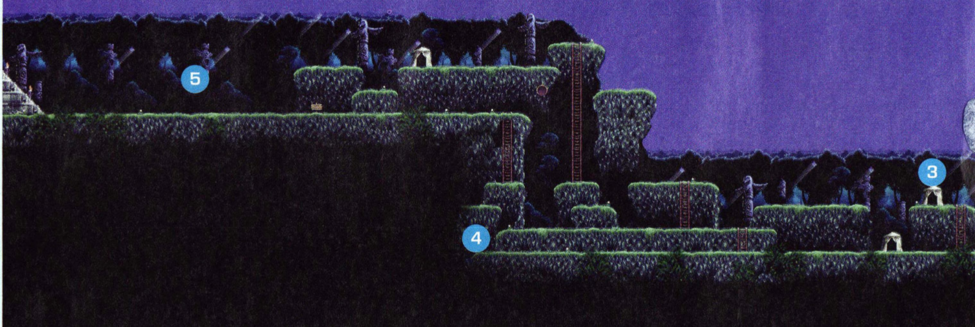


According to producer Jools Watsham, Max's destinations include "a dark, wintery land; a fiery temple; a spacey cosmos; and a fluffy cloudsville."



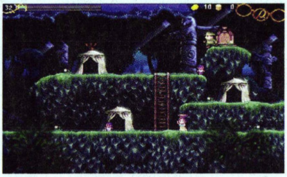
The Adventure Begins

Prepare for a WiiWare epic with an in-depth look at **La-Mulana**.

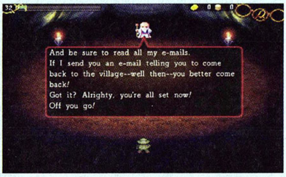


WiiWARE ACTION-ADVENTURE GAME La-Mulana has been a long time coming, but according to publisher Nicalis the wait is almost over. Development is essentially done, and the game needs only a few more tweaks before it will be ready to head to the Wii Shop Channel. In celebration of the impending release, here's a detailed look at the game's first area. —**CHRIS H.**

① This is where you'll begin your expedition into La-Mulana. By smashing objects you'll obtain money, and you should be sure to stop by the brown altar to save your game.

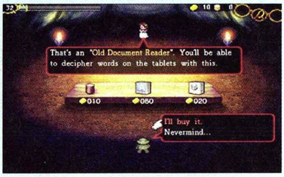


② In this tent you'll find Xelpud, the village elder. He may look old and out of touch, but he'll give you a special email program for your laptop. With the program installed, Xelpud will provide you with hints throughout your adventure.



And be sure to read all my e-mails.
If I send you an e-mail telling you to come back to the village--well then--you better come back!
Got it? Alrighty, you're all set now!
Off you go!

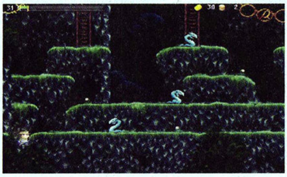
③ The village contains several shops, including, strangely enough, a PC store. Before you go too far, you should save up some cash and buy the Old Document Reader program and the Handy Scanner, which are used in conjunction to read and decipher ancient writings.



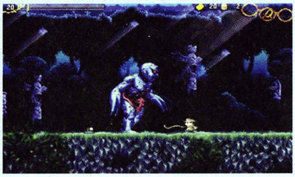
That's an "Old Document Reader". You'll be able to decipher words on the tablets with this.

I'll buy it.
Nevermind...

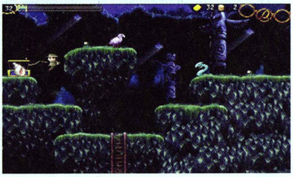
④ The village area is full of danger, but it has some niceties, too. If you stop by these hot springs, you can refill your health.

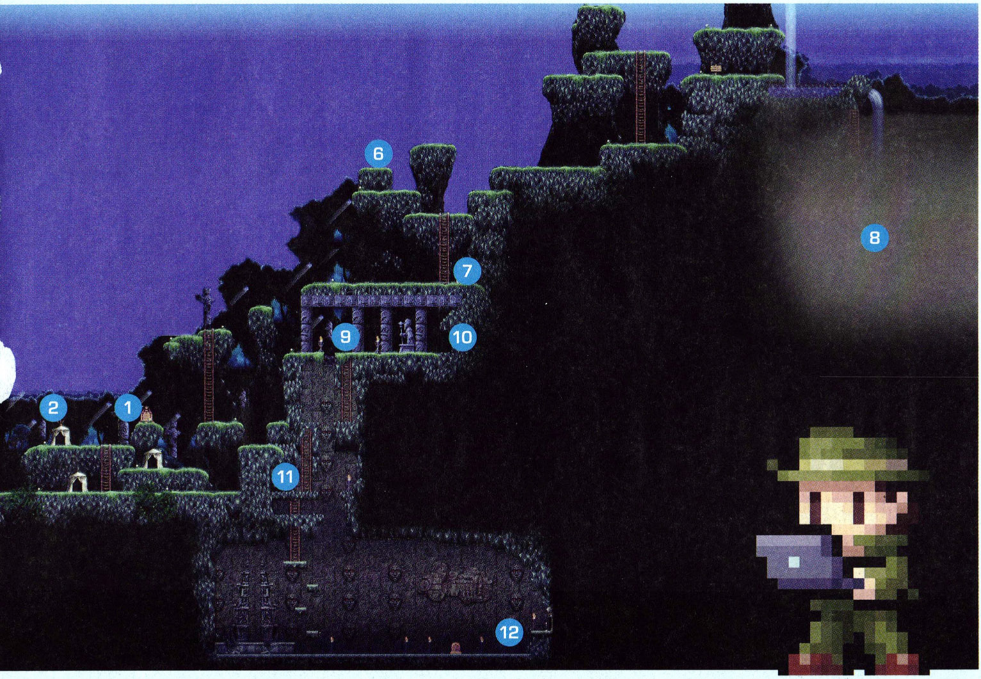


⑤ Far to the left of the village is a structure guarded by a multieyed blue giant named Argus. You won't be able to get past him until you find a relic called the Snake Cane.

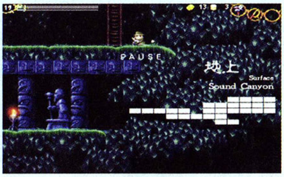


⑥ By placing a weight on a pedestal, you'll unlock a nearby treasure chest. Inside you'll find the Charonia Tritonis, a seashell that emits a sound if there's a secret nearby.

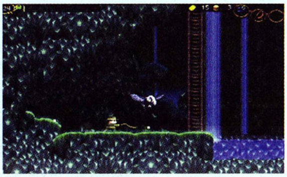




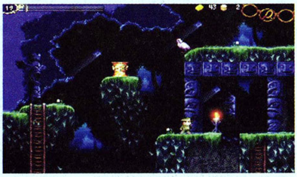
⑦ Be sure to investigate this skeleton—it's holding a valuable map. Of course, you'll need to have a map program for your laptop to make the best use of it.



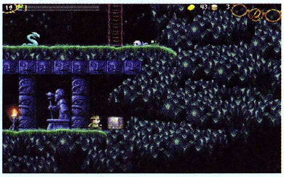
⑧ Though it's tempting to jump down the waterfall, it's not the smartest thing to do. It's very hard to get back up, and the water in the pool below is harmful. You probably shouldn't visit this area until later in the game.



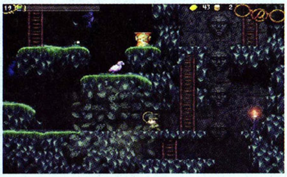
⑨ Here's another pedestal that's begging for a weight to be placed on it. When you do so, the floor will give way, revealing the passage into the La-Mulana ruins.



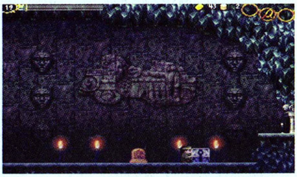
⑩ If you leap over the statue and attack the rock wall with your whip, you'll smash through the stone and find...a PC game?! Well, that's weird. Apparently loading the game into your laptop boosts your stats.

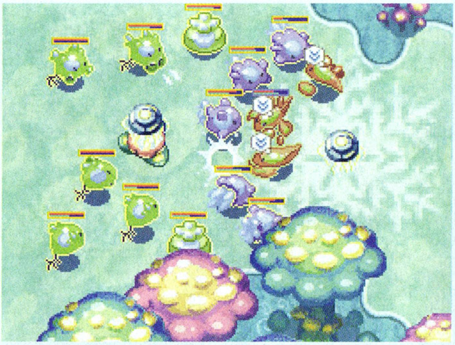


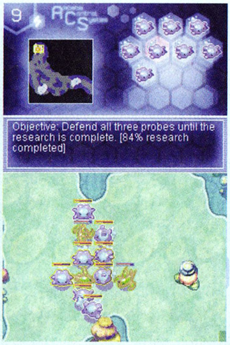
⑪ You can smash through this wall, as well. Doing so creates a handy shortcut between the ruins and the village.



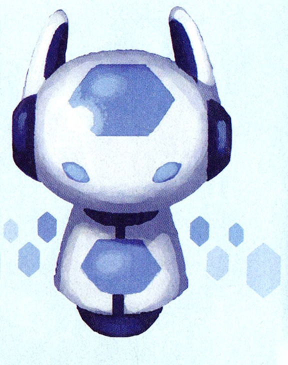
⑫ This is the entrance to La-Mulana proper. All you need to do to get inside is push the stone block and use it as a step. Of course, once you enter the ruins, the journey will get much, much trickier.







Objective: Defend all three probes until the research is complete. [84% research completed]



Microcosm of Doom

Real-time strategy goes under the microscope in Amoebattle for DSiWare.

YOU MIGHT THINK that a game about amoebas—simple, single-celled, microscopic organisms—would be boring, but the developers at Intrinsic Games (the company behind innovative platformer Divergent Shift) would beg to differ. The company's upcoming real-time strategy DSiWare offering, Amoebattle, presents the world of amoebas as one fraught with conflict, peril, and loads of tactical options.

Taking the role of a microbiologist equipped with an ACS (Amoeba Control System) and a robotic partner named AMI, you'll get to control several types of amoebas, including speedy Locusts, projectile-firing Wasps, powerful Sharks, and stat-boosting Queens. Commanding your amoeba army is as simple as tapping an amoeba on the touch screen—or drawing a circle around a group—and then tapping wherever you want it to go or whatever you want it to attack.

As you proceed through the game's four environments—including a mushroom forest, a volcano, and an underwater area—you'll learn to evolve your amoebas into new forms, and gain the ability to deploy mechanical probes that can create beneficial effects such as freezing or poisoning enemies, or temporarily taking command of enemy units.

The game should arrive in the Nintendo DSi Shop later this year, but in the meantime we decided to check in with producer Hersh Choksi and designer Henry Liu to find out more about this unique title. —**CHRIS H.**

NINTENDO POWER Why did you choose amoebas and the microscopic world as the subject matter of this game? Would you say you're pioneers in the amoeba-game genre?

HERSH CHOKSI Absolutely! There are very few games that focus on the microscopic, and we're excited to bring amoebas, typically underrepresented in games, to the forefront.

We chose to go with amoebas partly because nobody else had, and because of the creative flexibility it offered us. We could define the visual shape and characteristics of each amoeba unit, which is important in a real-time strategy game.

What does this game bring to the table that other DSiWare titles do not?

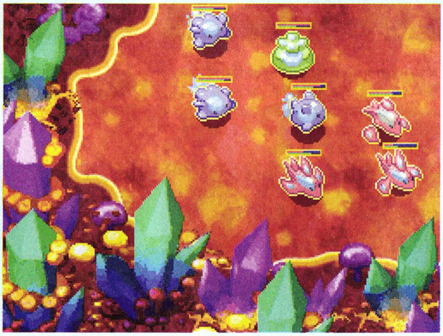
HC This project really is a labor of love, and it shows—the entire game has a level of quality that is unmatched by all but a few titles. This is by far the most ambitious project we have ever undertaken, with over a year of development. We're raising the bar of DSiWare games and players' expectations.

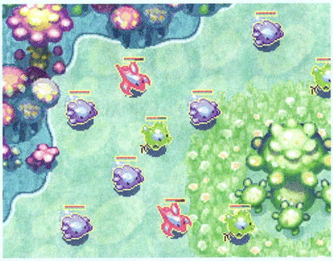
Other than the amoebas, how is this game different from other RTS titles?

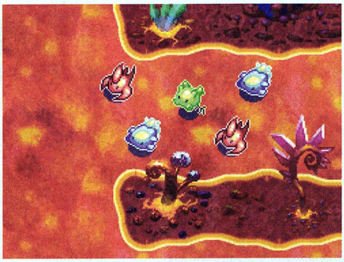
HC We wanted to develop an RTS for the DS that was fun and accessible to newcomers and veterans alike, bringing the genre to a whole new audience while still providing a challenge to more-experienced RTS players. In order to accomplish this, we needed to completely rethink the elements of an RTS, from its controls to the presentation. Typically, RTS games are created for PC gamers and the keyboard/mouse setup, but we focused on using the touch screen to intuitively command your amoebas. We knew we couldn't just take a traditional RTS and force it onto the DS, and so from the start we were focusing on how to bring the RTS genre to a handheld platform, and I think we've succeeded.

You've mentioned wanting to make this game accessible. How do you feel you've accomplished that?

HENRY LIU We started by examining RTS mechanics and identified which ones newer players struggled with. From there we started simplifying or completely removing those aspects to streamline the game and shift







the focus more to mechanics newer players enjoyed. One big example of how we've made the game more accessible is the fact that we removed base-building completely. In your run-of-the-mill RTS game, building structures and organizing them in your base is the source for a lot of confusion. For newer players, it's tough to keep track of what building produces what unit and where you put those buildings. So much time is spent on reading tool tips that by the time you can actually produce a tank, a full army is marching through your front door and it's Game Over.

In Amoebattle, the amoebas are the stars of the show. The focus is on controlling them and using them to fight. We don't have unit-producing structures because the amoebas themselves are what you use to make units. If you ever find that you want to have another Wasp amoeba, just select one that is well fed and click on Replicate. Then in a few seconds—POP!—you now have another Wasp amoeba. This makes the game much more fluid because you never have to take your attention off the front lines to go back to a base and build units. Everything you need is always with you.

What's the game's storyline?

HC You are a new microbiologist in the Amoeba Experimental Laboratory, a facility dedicated to studying amoebas and their habitats. Guided by your friendly AI assistant, AMI, you set out to explore the microscopic world. But something sinister is going on: amoebas are being corrupted, and the corruption is spreading. It's up to you and your amoebas to investigate and destroy the source of the corruption and save the amoebas!

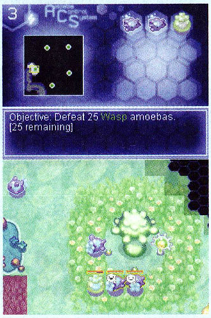
What are the differences between omnivores, carnivores, and herbivores, and how do those differences affect how one plays the game?

HC Your amoebas need to be fed in order to perform actions such as replicating, which is how you grow your amoeba army. Herbivores can only eat algae, but are equipped with ranged attacks and work well in groups. Carnivores gain food by attacking and eating other amoebas; they're the fastest and strongest, but take the most time and energy to replicate. Omnivores, of course, get food from both algae and other amoebas, and though they're the weakest of the amoebas, they're the fastest to replicate.

What's really cool is how these different amoeba classes allow each player to mix and match the unit composition to create and execute the best strategy for each mission. Some players might want to amass a large army of omnivores, while others might want to focus on an efficient and deadly carnivore strike force—it opens up the game and lets players choose how they want to approach each mission.

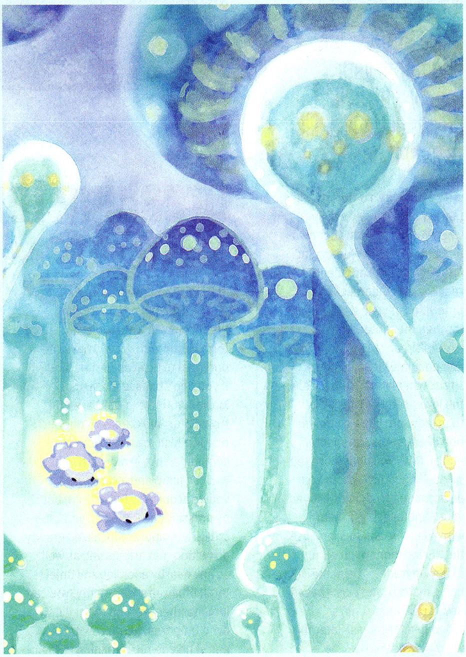
Is there anything else players should know about the game?

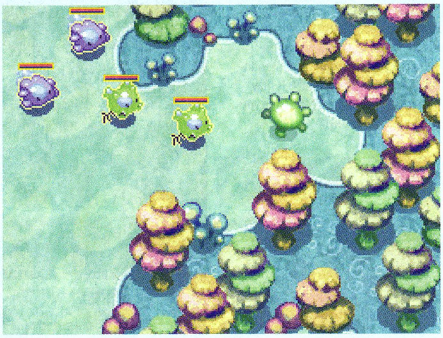
HL We are building Amoebattle to be a very fluid and dynamic game where every decision matters. It's accessible for new players but also different enough for veteran RTS players to have plenty to sink their teeth into.

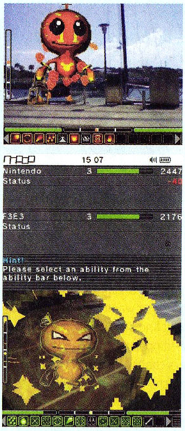


Objective: Defeat 25 Wasp amoebas.
[25 remaining]

[Above] Algae will power-up your amoebas faster than you can say "endoplasmic reticulum."







Hint!
Please select an ability from the ability bar below.

There, in the Closet!

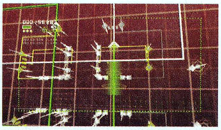
Spirit Hunters Inc. augments your reality with evil spirits and the skills to fight them.

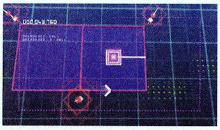
WHY JOURNEY TO otherworldly fantasy lands to slay evil spirits when you can do it in your own filthy hovel? Spirit Hunters Inc. for DSiWare is an augmented-reality game that takes real-time video of your surroundings through the Nintendo DSi system's rear-facing camera, and populates it with enemy spirits when playing it back on the lower screen. The game then plays out like a combination of a first-person shooter and an RPG; you hunt down the spirits hiding throughout your environment by moving around your handheld, blast them with spell-like abilities, and use the XP and money you earn to buy upgrades. The game is being made by Australia-based developer Nnooo and is scheduled for release later this year. **—CASEY L.**

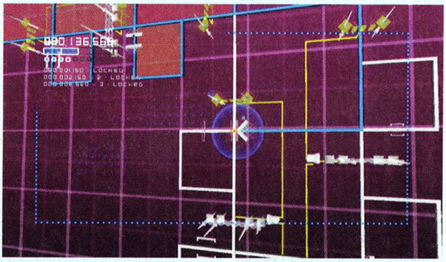
The Great Escape

Free yourself from the grasp of an evil computer in escapeVektor: Chapter 1 for WiiWare.

SEEMINGLY INSPIRED BY properties such as *TRON*, escapeVektor: Chapter 1 tasks you with overcoming enemy forces from within the virtual world of a computer. Aided by a character named Vektor (who you're trying to help escape from the CPU's clutches), you must guide an arrow-shaped avatar across increasingly complex patterns of lines so you can open the exit in each level and stay one step ahead of the CPU.







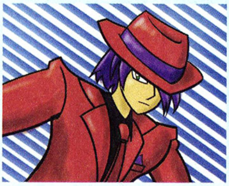
The retro-themed gameplay is fairly straightforward—your goal is simply to trace over the full pattern in every stage while avoiding bad guys—and the stylized graphics have an old-school arcade appeal. But simple doesn't necessarily mean easy. Different enemy types have distinct AI and patrol the routes in various ways, and your offensive capabilities are minimal; you have a gauge-based dash and can acquire a limited number of short-range bombs, but you'll need to move carefully and plan ahead if you want to survive. Fortunately, Vektor is able to hack into the program and upgrade your abilities at regular intervals.

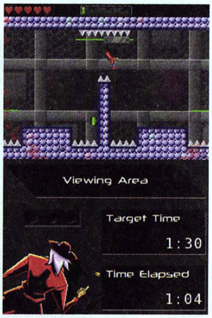
As you can tell from the game's title, escapeVektor: Chapter 1 is the first in a planned series, and developer/publisher Nnooo even has plans to bring the saga to Nintendo 3DS. But every journey must have a beginning; this one is scheduled to kick off when escapeVektor hits WiiWare in the second half of this year. **—CHRIS H.**

Breaking the Law—of Gravity

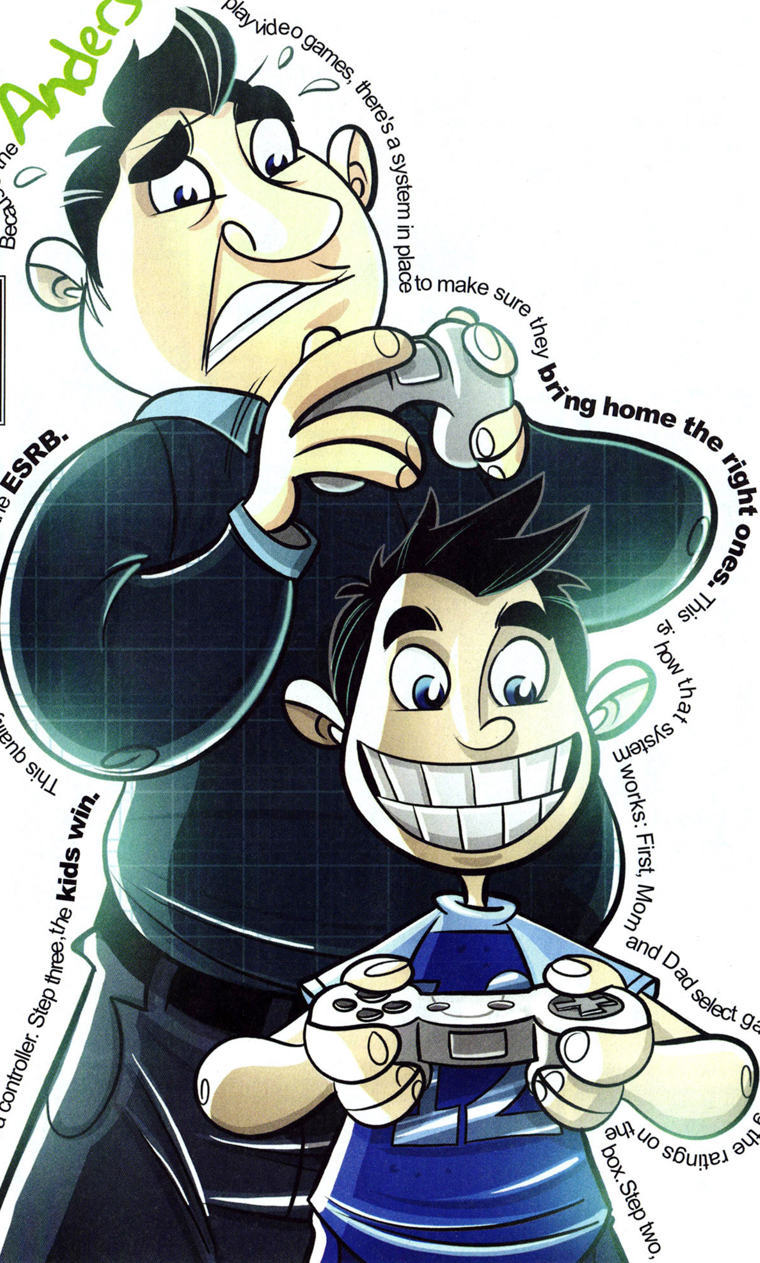
Nothing can hold you down in DSiWare platformer Antipole.

PLATFORMERS, GENERALLY SPEAKING, can be a lot of fun. Platformers in which you can fool around with gravity have the potential to be even better. (And if you don't believe me, just ask Mario.) Antipole, a DSiWare title from Saturnine Games, is one such title in which gravity is yours to command. Like in any platformer, you can jump and attack (once you've acquired a Pulse Gun), but by pressing the R Button, you can create a temporary localized gravity distortion that affects you as well as any nearby enemies and objects. By skillfully altering gravity, you can jump farther, walk on the ceiling, overcome treacherous obstacles, and send enemies crashing to their doom. The game features 20 stages of 2D sidescrolling action, and there is bonus content for players who own Cosmos X2, Saturnine's previous DSiWare offering. The game should be available in the Nintendo DSi Shop very soon; in fact, it may already be available by the time you read this. **—CHRIS H.**





Spikes, moving platforms, and reverse gravity—oh my!



Because the Andersons play video games, there's a system in place to make sure they **bring home the right ones.** This is how that system works: First, Mom and Dad select games using the ratings on the box. Step two, everyone gets a controller. Step three, the **kids win.** This quality time is presented by the **ESRB.**

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

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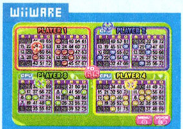
WiiWARE



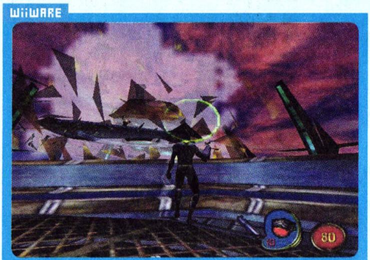
BINGO PARTY DELUXE

PUBLISHER: **ATEAM**
GENRE: **PARTY GAME**
Wii POINTS: **500**

When playing alone, Bingo Party Deluxe isn't a whole lot of fun. Luckily, the developers have clearly built this game with multiplayer in mind, and with a few other people in the room, it's more enjoyable. The three different gameplay modes allow for a bit of variety, and the Bingo Party mode in particular turns the standard bingo formula into a frantic race against the other players. There may not be a lot to this title, but it's a decent way to pass some time with the family. —**PHIL T.**

Hmmm...

WiiWARE



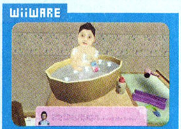
MDK2

PUBLISHER: **INTERPLAY** GENRE: **ACTION** Wii POINTS: **1,000**

Although it has grown somewhat obscure in recent years, back in the late '90s/early 2000s, MDK and its sequel were rather well known to gamers. Given the fondness that many still have for the series, it's great to see it return. The action in this third-person shooter is just as exciting as ever, and the game controls remarkably well with the Wii Remote controller (although you'll probably need to adjust its sensitivity). The often humorous plot leads you to control three different characters throughout the adventure. Kurt's platforming- and sniper-centric stages and Max's shooting-filled levels are tons of fun, but Dr. Hawkins' puzzle-oriented stages tend to slow the game's pace. Even so, the overall package is a blast. —**PHIL T.**

Recommended

WiiWARE



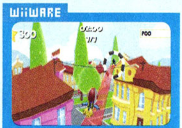
MY LITTLE BABY

PUBLISHER: **DTP YOUNG ENTERTAINMENT**
GENRE: **SIMULATION**
Wii POINTS: **600**

My Little Baby is realistic—but in all the wrong ways. The majority of activities involve the tedious, step-by-step processes of baby chores, such as cleaning up after the baby and giving it baths. It's a commendable attempt at catering to young players, but the boring, repetitive activities simply aren't worth the slim rewards, especially given the slow pace and the nagging nanny that's constantly on your case. Besides, the baby graphics are just downright creepy. —**CODY M.**

Grumble Grumble

WiiWARE



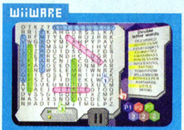
PLAY WITH BIRDS

PUBLISHER: **GAMES FARM**
GENRE: **ALTERNATIVE**
Wii POINTS: **500**

If nothing else, Play with Birds is original; players fly around a colorful 3D neighborhood experiencing life as a cartoon bird might. Activities include an assortment of rudimentary minigames and the dropping of dookie on select targets (I'm not kidding), all of which earn budding birds fame points (what!?) that can be spent wooing she-birds, who in turn give up...more minigames. It's intriguingly weird; unfortunately, it's also low-rent and repellant. —**PATRICK C.**

Grumble Grumble

WiiWARE



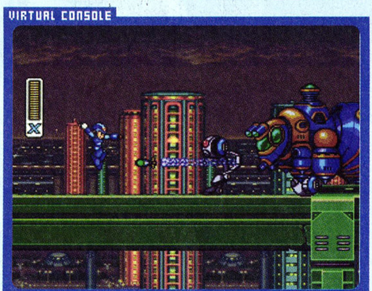
WORD SEARCHER DELUXE

PUBLISHER: **DIGITAL LEISURE**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **500**

This follow-up to Word Searcher (released in 2009) doesn't feel especially deluxe. The latest edition has 100 new puzzle categories and a multiplayer option, but the presentation is as dull as ever and the pencil-and-paper-inspired gameplay is almost nonexistent. The game's most noteworthy feature is the ability to purchase new puzzles, but the price is a little steep and the game doesn't even tell you what categories are in each DLC package. —**CHRIS H.**

Grumble Grumble

VIRTUAL CONSOLE



MEGA MAN X

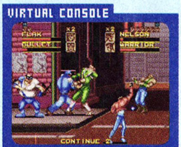
PLATFORM: **SUPER NES** PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
GENRE: **ACTION** ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1994**

Chris H's Pick

Mega Man X is one of the truly great Super NES games. The first 16-bit Mega Man title, this game builds upon the winning formula of the excellent NES series and adds just enough new content—such as hidden armor upgrades and the ability to wall-jump—that the action feels fresh yet not overly complicated. A great new cast of characters and an aged-up storyline further enhance the appeal, and unlike most Mega Man games, the difficulty is pretty reasonable. This one is not to be missed.

Recommended

VIRTUAL CONSOLE



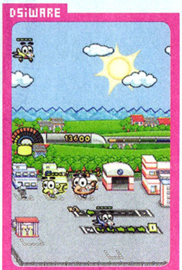
RIVAL TURF!

PLATFORM: **SUPER NES**
PUBLISHER: **JALECO**
GENRE: **ACTION**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1992**

When it comes to beat-'em-ups, it's the little things that separate the good from the mediocre—the animation, the character design, the give and take when you're exchanging blows with an enemy. Rival Turf!, unfortunately, is definitely subpar in those categories. Sure, it has co-op gameplay, but that's not exactly the game-selling feature that it was in 1992. It's not awful, but it's no Final Fight or Streets of Rage. —**CHRIS H.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



AIRPORT MANIA: FIRST FLIGHT

PUBLISHER: **LEMON GAMES**
GENRE: **ALTERNATIVE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

If you're new to the Airport Mania series, this edition is your best buy. A few levels from WiiWare's First Flight are omitted, but this version is portable and costs less, and it's much more satisfying to direct planes with the stylus than it is to point and click. —**CODY M.**

Recommended

DSiWARE

HP 950/1000
SP 180/180

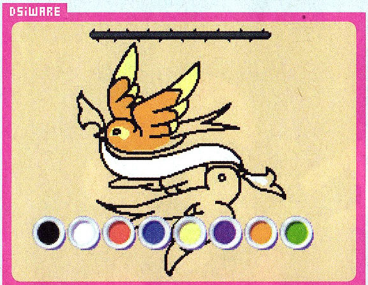
ANONYMOUS NOTES CHAPTER 2: FROM THE ABYSS

PUBLISHER: **SONIC POWERED**
GENRE: **ADVENTURE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

Whereas the first chapter of Anonymous Notes represented a solid dungeon crawl for a compelling price, the second chapter proves less enticing; Chapter 2 is more of the same to a degree that's difficult to stomach (or pay for). Also, a game without level-grinding relies heavily on loot to keep you slaying thousands of monsters, and this series simply doesn't deliver adequate loot. —**PATRICK C.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



ART OF INK

PUBLISHER: **SABARASA** GENRE: **ALTERNATIVE** NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **800**

I have to hand it to the folks at Sabarasa: Art of Ink is certainly unique. I've played a lot of video games, but this is the first one I've encountered that's about being a tattoo artist. Although the bulk of the game involves tracing patterns and coloring in areas, there's more to it than that; there are adventure-game-style dialogue trees, items you earn to improve your performance, and layers of gameplay that unlock as the game progresses. It's also got a lot of content for a DSiWare title. With all that said, the core concept gets somewhat stale, and the $8 price (on the high side for DSiWare) makes it hard to give this a full recommendation. —**CHRIS H.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE

DODOGO! ROBO

PUBLISHER: **NEKO ENTERTAINMENT**
GENRE: **ACTION-PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

Neko's DodoGo! series—which tasks players with shepherding dodo eggs through platform puzzles using environmental gadgets—gets a third, robot-themed entry. This time around, play centers on collecting targets rather than on raw survival, so those familiar with the series will find new challenges. Fortunately, Neko rolls out the red carpet for newcomers as well, as solid tutorials and a slow build to complexity keep the intimidation factor low. —**PATRICK C.**

Recommended

DSiWARE

GO SERIES CAPTAIN SUB

PUBLISHER: **GAMEBRIDGE**
GENRE: **ACTION**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

There isn't a whole lot to Captain Sub, but that actually adds to the game's charm. The extremely basic gameplay (explore an underwater maze to collect treasure) is simple yet fun, and the slow pace and relatively harmless enemies keep the mood relaxed. Still, the action may be a bit too slow for some, and occasionally having to restart because the designers put more locks than keys in a stage reeks of lazy level design. —**PHIL T.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE

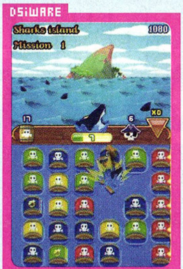
ESCAPE TRICK: THE SECRET OF ROCK CITY PRISON

PUBLISHER: **INTENSE** GENRE: **ADVENTURE** NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

You're trapped in solitary confinement. The only objects immediately at your disposal are a spoon and a lemon. How do you get out? If such a scenario sounds compelling to you, then Escape Trick: The Secret of Rock City Prison should be right up your alley. In the vein of classic adventure games, this title is all about searching your environment for items you can use creatively to solve puzzles. The interface is a bit rough and the art was probably done by the janitor, but the puzzles and story are good stuff. Not bad for $5. —**CHRIS H.**

Recommended

DSiWARE



IKIBAGO: THE CARIBBEAN JEWEL

PUBLISHER: **NEKO ENTERTAINEMNT**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

The main problem with this otherwise-fun block-sorting game is that you have too much freedom to move the pieces around. Without restrictions, the action is almost too easy, and it starts to feel like you're straightening out a sock drawer. —**PHIL T.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE

Dig Here
SLINGO QUEST
SCORE 13365

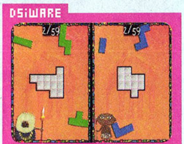
SLINGO QUEST

PUBLISHER: **MUMBOJUMBO**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **800**

Slingo Quest features all of the thrills of single-player bingo. That is to say, it's not thrilling at all. This glorified random-number generator relies entirely on luck instead of skill to succeed. The handful of power-ups add nothing to the gameplay, which grows stale within minutes. —**PHIL T.**

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE



UBONGO

PUBLISHER: **KORNER ENTERTAINMENT**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Based on the German version of a popular Swedish board game, Ubongo is a two-part strategy puzzler in which players first race to complete Tetris-esque shape puzzles, then take turns removing colored jewels from a shared playing board. The player who collects the most same-colored jewels wins. While Korner's video game conversion captures the addictiveness of the board game, uneven presentation and repetitive puzzles detract. —**PATRICK C.**

Hmmm...

PREVIEWS

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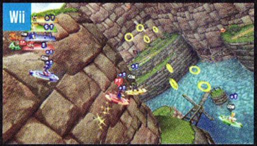
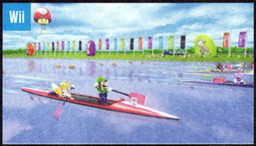
MARIO & SONIC AT THE LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC GAMES

Going for the gold

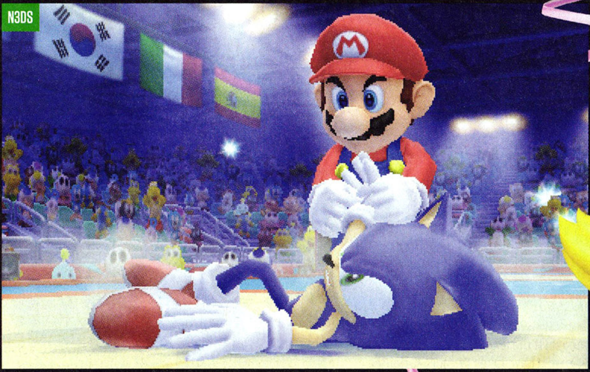




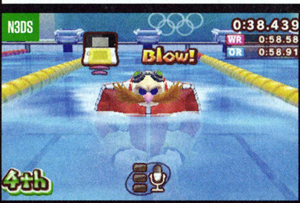
AFTER SHOWING OFF their competitive spirits at the 2008 Beijing and 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, medal-winning mascots Mario and Sonic are returning for next summer's London-hosted event. While not straying too far from the formula that's sold over 19 million units, Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games for both the Wii console and Nintendo 3DS handheld represent a refinement of the previous titles' gameplay and graphics and deliver a pick-up-and-play experience that should appeal to seasoned sports fans and newcomers alike.

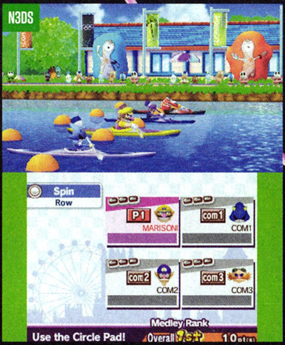
The start of our demo featured the Wii version, which Sega promises will see the return of fan-favorite athletic activities from the previous console releases. That said, our time behind the Wii Remote controller was solely focused on brand-new events: kayaking, badminton, and horseback riding. The kayaking had us holding the controller paddlelike and matching movements to onscreen prompts; mirroring the commands in quick succession led to our kayak crossing the finish line first. (Wario, who placed third, was not happy.) Team co-op promises to up the competitive ante even further by requiring two players—in the same craft—to synchronize their moves.

Badminton, which should feel familiar to anyone who's played other racket-based games on the Wii, has participants mimicking the expected swinging motions to serve and hit the shuttlecock. The inclusion of special smash moves add flavor to the matches, as they bring out the competitors' colorful personalities; Mario, for example, literally rises above the court to return lightning-quick shots at stunned opponents during his over-the-top animation.



[Above] Mario puts his secret past as a gangland enforcer to good use in the judo competition.



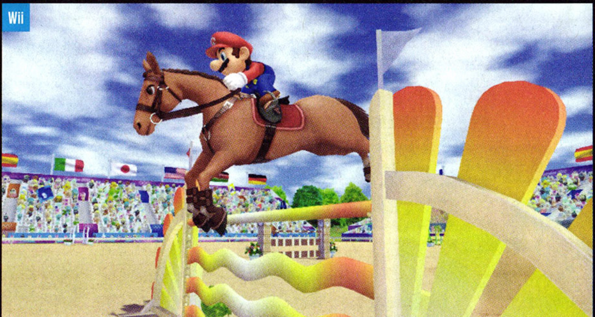


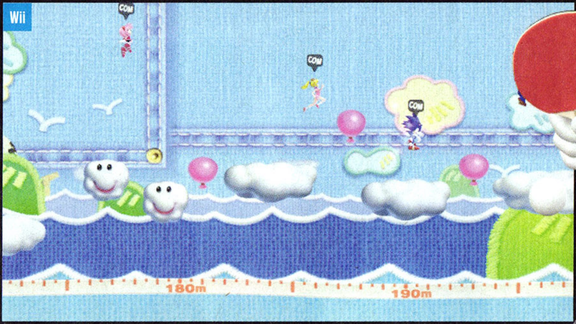
We enjoyed watching Wario sulk on the boat docks and Donkey Kong flail wildly at our flame-trailed birdies, but it was the new equestrian event that got us most excited about a run for the gold. Wielding the Wii Remote sideways, we steered our steed by tilting the controller back and forth and got him moving at a good clip when we shook it up and down. A press of the 1 Button slows down the horse, while 2 triggers jumps over gates and obstacles. Once mastered, the intuitive controls yield a nice sense of speed, building momentum as you alternate between air-catching jumps and dirt-kicking gallops.

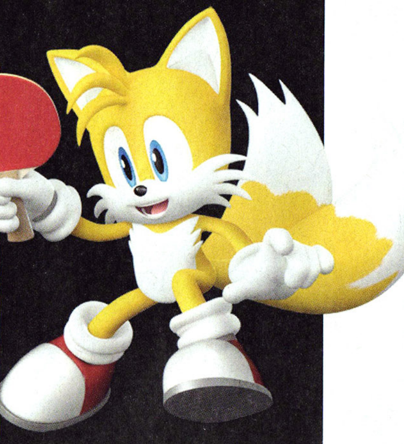
You can count on breaking a sweat in the Wii version's single-player mode, especially when you get that kayak paddle cranking at top speed, but the athletic action promises to really heat up during the cooperative and competitive challenges; 20-plus events, two- to four-player local support, and Dream Events—traditional sports tweaked with Mario- and Sonic-inspired gameplay and environments—ensure many Olympiad-wannabes will be playing this one with friends and family.

While controlling Mario, Sonic, and their pals through Olympic challenges feels comfortably familiar on the Wii, the N3DS entry offers a fresher experience. By leveraging the portable platform's varied control options and eye-popping tech, the developers seem to be delivering much more than a cash-grab Wii port or a glorified DS game. Additionally, the visuals—even in 2D—are getting a significant boost over those seen in the previous portable versions of the franchise.

Fight fans will enjoy seeing the Nintendo and Sega mascots bare their fists for judo, a timing-based event that demands sharp reflexes. Quick-thumbed gamers must match Control Pad and face-button prompts before their opponents unleash match-ending moves. As the challenge escalates, the shoulder buttons are shuffled into the mix, making it more difficult to pull off fin-







[Above] If the long jump were like this in real life, we'd have taken PE more seriously.

ishers. Visual touches, such as sweat pouring off competitors and multiple camera angles capturing the meet-the-mat animations, spring impressively from the 3D display.

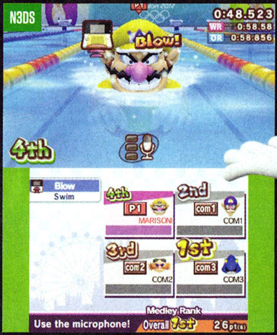
Gymnastics abandons traditional controls in favor of the hardware's gyro sensor. Steadying yourself on a balance beam, for example, is handled by moving the handheld to position a ball in the center of a rectangle. More-complicated moves have you steering the sphere like a marble through various twists and turns within a time limit. Each successful maneuver yields a slick gymnastics animation, such as Princess Peach performing a graceful flip on the narrow beam.

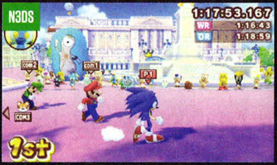
The 20k race-walk is a surprisingly engaging rhythm game that tasks players with using the stylus to follow music along a meter on the bottom screen while their character struts up top. To maintain speed, you must sweep the stylus in time with the music's changing tempo. What easily could be a boring "just walk really fast" game may turn out to be one of the title's highlights thanks to its inventive rhythm-based premise.

Breaststroke and kayaking are by far the simplest events on the Nintendo 3DS roster, but both utilize some of the hardware's more unique control schemes. The breaststroke, for example, requires you to blow into the microphone to propel the swimmer to the finish, while kayaking requires you to rapidly rotate the Circle Pad clockwise if you wish to leave the competition in your wake.

While pretty straightforward, the N3DS events are quick and varied, yielding addictive pacing and an appeal reminiscent of the WarioWare games. The pop-off-the-screen presentation doesn't hurt either; in addition to the aforementioned perspiration on the judo competitors, celebratory confetti and cheering crowds take advantage of the third dimension. Venues also have noticeable depth, adding an extra layer of immersion to the spirited games. The Nintendo 3DS version's ambitious design is also complemented by plenty of replay-boosting potential; the 50-plus events will support two- to four-player local-wireless co-op and competitive play, allowing you and your Nintendo 3DS system-owning buddies to continue to compete long after the solo game's been mastered.

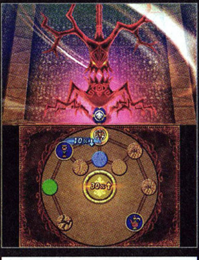
Of course, the real star of both versions is the colorful cast. Providing the ultimate mascot mash-up, Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games boasts 20 characters, including Bowser, Yoshi, Tails, Dr. Eggman, Daisy, Vector, Knuckles, and Blaze, from two of gaming's most personality-packed properties. Broken into four skill-based categories—power, all-around, speed, and skill—the athletes compete in locales based on London's actual Olympic venues, such as the picturesque Greenwich Park. While the detail-drenched settings nicely capture the flavor of the host city, we're not sure the queen would approve of Sonic tearing up the royal landscaping. Nonetheless, in our living rooms or on the road, we look forward to going for the gold when Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games races to retail. —MATT C.



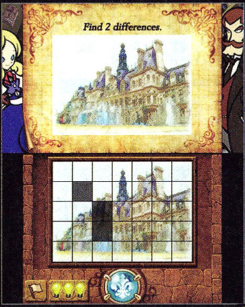


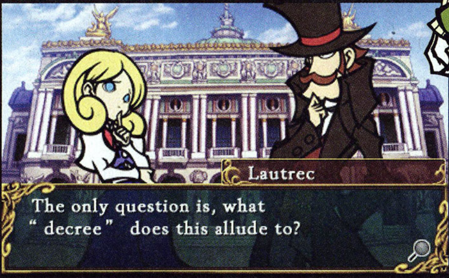
Wii N3DS

PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: SEGA
RELEASE: TBA



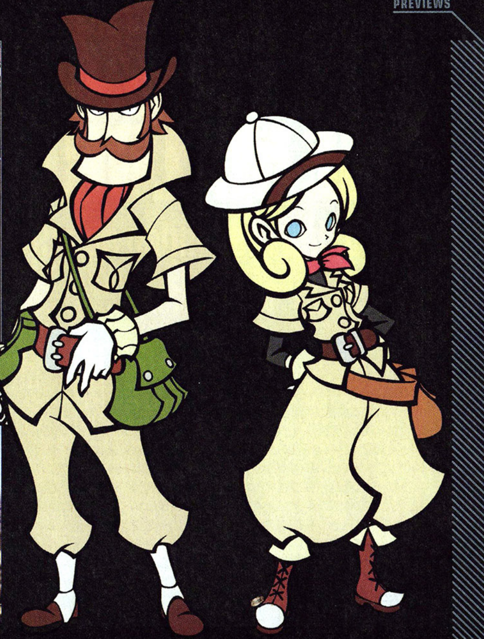
[Above] It's time to earn your doctorate in fighting evil spirits.





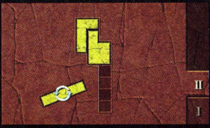
Lautrec

The only question is, what " decree " does this allude to?



DOCTOR LAUTREC AND THE FORGOTTEN KNIGHTS

A man. A mystery. A monkey?



GIVEN HIS FANCY hat, advanced degree, young apprentice, and penchant for solving puzzles, one might assume that Dr. Jean-Pierre Lautrec is nothing more than a Professor Layton knock-off. And though there definitely are some similarities between the characters (and their games), our hands-on time with an early version of Doctor Lautrec and the Forgotten Knights indicates that the title contains a variety of features that will allow it to stand on its own.

For one thing, the doc has a monkey named Kiki under his hat. (Seriously.) For another, Dr. Lautrec takes a much more involved approach to adventuring. In the game's opening cutscene, for example, the doctor punches his way through the wall of some underground ruins (and nearly falls in molten lava for his troubles). And the physicality isn't limited to cinematics; unlike in the point-and-click Layton games, you guide Dr. Lautrec around environments with the Circle Pad or Control Pad, conversing with characters, obtaining items, pushing blocks, and sometimes engaging in stealth segments, Solid Snake-style. Occasionally you'll even have to fight evil spirits, accomplished by placing magical objects on circular panels to summon elemental creatures.

But the game still puts plenty of focus on its cerebral aspects. As you explore the streets, landmarks, and underground catacombs of 19th-century Paris, you'll encounter a number of brain-bending challenges, ranging from linking words in a crossword puzzle to assembling a multilayered puzzle to finding differences between two images. There's no telling what you'll have to overcome when you're trying to unravel a mystery surrounding a lost treasure of King Louis XIV.

Rounding out the adventure are a diverse cast of characters and some excellent production values—the game includes plentiful voice work and numerous anime sequences that take full advantage of the hardware's 3D capabilities. With touches like that, Dr. Lautrec just might give Professor Layton a run for his money. —**CHRIS H.**

N3DS
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
DEVELOPER: **WINKYSOFT**
RELEASE: **SUMMER 2011**

MYSTERY CASE FILES: THE MALGRAVE INCIDENT

If you find the hidden objects, you'll find the truth.

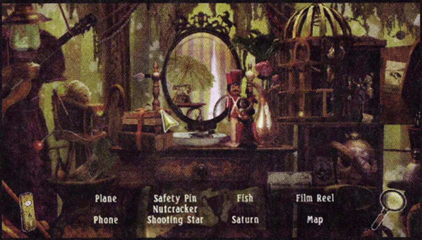
SOMETHING IS SERIOUSLY wrong on Malgrave Island. Sure, the owner of the island, Winston Malgrave, says he merely needs your help so he can revive his "beloved Sarah," but a lot of things just don't add up. The entire island—which was once home to a bustling village—has fallen into disrepair; there are huge cracks in the ground and debris everywhere, and all manner of locks and strange mechanisms are set up to keep the curious at bay. Nonetheless, the island is supposedly home to something akin to the fountain of youth, and as a detective, it's up to you to figure out what's going on.

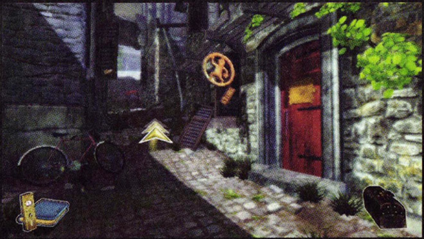
Like Mystery Case Files: MillionHeir (released for the Nintendo DS in 2008), The Malgrave Incident is designed to appeal to a broad audience. The core play mechanic—using your powers of observation to find a seemingly random assortment of objects hidden within cluttered 2D environments—also remains the same. In one room you might need to find a lightbulb, an octopus, a telephone, and a pair of eyeglasses, while another might require you to locate some candy, a pinecone, a toy car, a shooting star, and a beard. Strangely enough, finding said items releases a mysterious pink powder that's crucial to Malgrave's plan.

Compared to its DS predecessor, however, this game has more of a serious tone, as well as a greater emphasis on adventuring and exploration. Instead of simply jumping from puzzle area to puzzle area, you get to explore the island (via a point-and-click interface) in its entirety, from the docks to the town to the cemetery and beyond. You'll encounter doors you can't open and riddles you can't solve until you locate the proper clues, and you'll often need certain tools (which you obtain via the object-finding segments) to access new areas—hedge clippers, for example, are used to cut through thorny vines, and a bug zapper eliminates the bees that have overrun a stairway. Just what are all these obstacles hiding? That's what you'll have to find out.

In addition to the single-player adventure mode, the game offers a multiplayer mode that focuses entirely on hidden-object puzzles.
—**CHRIS H.**

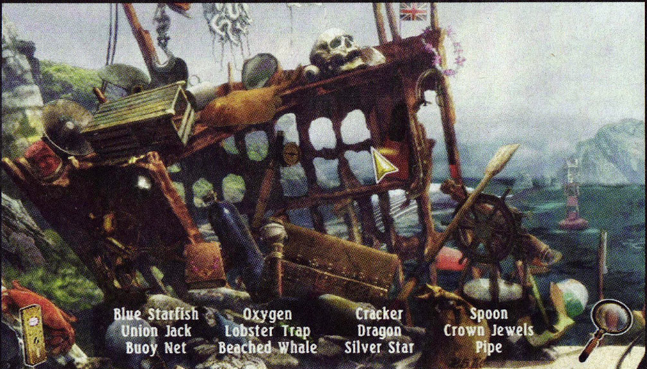
Wii
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **BIG FISH GAMES**
RELEASE: **JUNE 2011**


Plane
Phone
Safety Pin
Nutcracker
Shooting Star
Fish
Saturn
Film Reel
Map

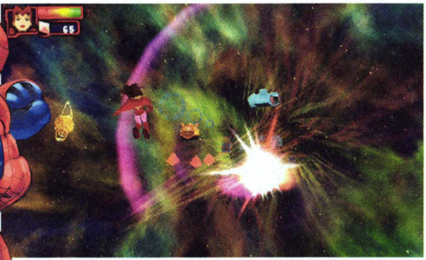


[Below] Winston Malgrave really should have hired a maid. Every room on his island is a mess!

Lightbulb
Glasses
Crystal Ball
Pistol
Star Pillow
Club
Mandolin
Spider
Car
Musical Note
Chess Piece
Pig Tile


Blue Starfish
Union Jack
Buoy Net
Oxygen
Lobster Trap
Beached Whale
Cracker
Dragon
Silver Star
Spoon
Crown Jewels
Pipe

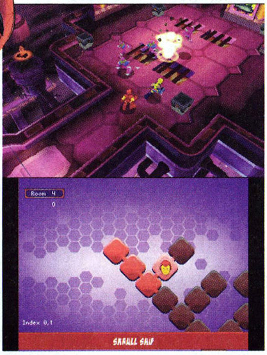
MARVEL SUPER HERO SQUAD: THE INFINITY GAUNTLET



Little superheroes. Big trouble.

Cut from the same cloth as the LEGO action games, Marvel Super Hero Squad: The Infinity Gauntlet offers a lighthearted, cartoony, humorous take on some of the world's greatest superheroes. Inspired by the *Marvel Super Hero Squad* animated series, this top-down action-adventure puts you in control of characters such as Captain America, Wolverine, and Spider-Man as they battle to save the universe from the evil Thanos—and retrieve the spiffy new boots that Iron Man bought Thor for his birthday. Each hero has unique powers and abilities, both in and out of combat, so you'll have to swap to the right character for the job. For example, Hulk can lift heavy objects, Invisible Woman can bypass sensors, and Iron Man can hack computers via a touch-screen minigame. As the heroes make their way through seven levels (including an all-new stage exclusive to the Nintendo 3DS version of the game), they'll visit famous Marvel locales (including Asgard and Asteroid M), and fight big-time villains such as Super-Skrull and Dr. Doom. —**CHRIS H.**

N3DS PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **GRIPTONITE**
RELEASE DATE: **3RD QUARTER 2011**



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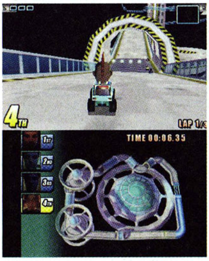
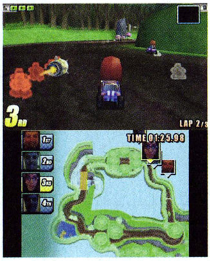
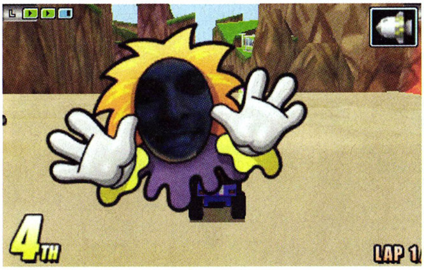
SKRULL SHIP

[Below] Some stages let you play as villains such as Magneto and Loki.





[Below] If you've ever wanted to have your mug plastered onto some creepy, eight-fingered clown, Face Racers is definitely the game for you.



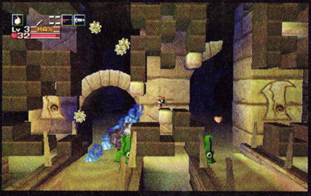
FACE RACERS: PHOTO FINISH

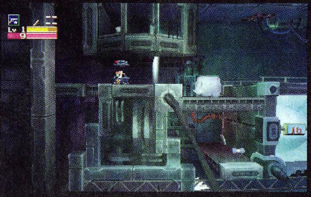
Meet the new face of the kart-racing genre.

Eager to hit the kart track with your new Nintendo 3DS? Majesco and Renegade Kid are getting the drop on Mario with their own take on the genre. Face Racers: Photo Finish offers the typical kart-racing components—colorful racetracks, wacky physics, and a variety of midrace power-ups—but also allows you to use the cameras on your system to personalize the experience. You can snap a photo of yourself to make your own racer, stick faces from your friends (or enemies) on your competitors, and even make your own ads, photograph them, and stick them onto in-game billboards.

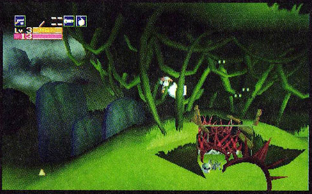
Developer Renegade Kid (which made Moon and the Dementium series) proved itself to be one of the most technically proficient developers on the original DS, and we're eager to see what the company can do with the more advanced hardware of the Nintendo 3DS. Face Racers: Photo Finish is scheduled to ship in September, and will support competitive play both online and over single-card and multicard wireless connections. —**CASEY L.**

N3DS PUBLISHER: **MAJESCO**
DEVELOPER: **RENEGADE KID**
RELEASE: **SEPTEMBER 2011**





[Above] The Egg Corridor may look different, but it's still overrun with evil elephants.

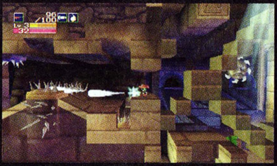


CAVE STORY 3D

This isn't the same story you remember.

CAVE STORY HAS earned plenty of praise in its PC, WiiWare, and DSiWare incarnations, and rightfully so—it's a superb action-adventure title packed with challenge, interesting characters, excellent level design, and an intriguing plot. But do we really need another version of the game on Nintendo hardware? So far the signs point to yes.

Though Cave Story veterans will be instantly familiar with the game's premise—the hero wakes up alone in a cave and is immediately thrust into a world of insane doctors, terrified rabbitlike villagers, and cockroach-eating dudes—Cave Story 3D has been given a total graphical overhaul. This is the first time the world of Cave Story has been polygonally rendered, and the result is a completely new experience. The Egg Corridor, for example, previously looked somewhat generic, but it now comes across as a technological wonderland filled with marvelous machinery. Though the level layouts haven't changed, you could almost mistake Cave Story 3D for an all-new game.



From a gameplay perspective, Cave Story 3D is sticking to its roots. As you visit locations such as lush grasslands, a hazardous desert, a desolate labyrinth, and the doctor's sinister plantation, your platforming and shooting skills will be put to the test, plus there's a good bit of nonlinear exploration (made easier than ever thanks to a persistent bottom-screen map) to keep things interesting. Along the way, you'll acquire an arsenal of weapons and several helpful items (among them a jet pack, a disguise, and an underwater breathing device). However, the game features some new content as well, including an additional area and scenario near the end of the adventure that allows you to unlock the Prinny—publisher NIS America's mascot—as a playable character.

The version of the game that we played still had a ways to go—the lighting wasn't final, for example—but if the last few months of development proceed smoothly, this could be a must-have title for the Nintendo 3DS. —**CHRIS H.**

N3DS PUBLISHER: **NIS AMERICA**
DEVELOPER: **NICALIS/STUDIO PIXEL**
RELEASE: **AUGUST 2011**

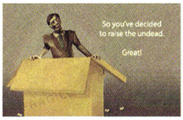
PET ZOMBIES

Because everybody wants an undead freak to call their own.

If you're intrigued by the prospect of raising virtual pets but dissuaded from the enterprise by a lack of interest in cuteness, Majesco feels your pain; Pet Zombies promises to marry pet simulation with the world's most ubiquitous undead species.

Players first create customizable zombies—characteristics such as degree of decay, clothing, and bone deformation can be tweaked to preference—then care for (or torment!) their creations for fun and profit. Interactions, including outrageous maintenance routines, petting, poking, or even dismemberment, take place against classic zombie backdrops such as evacuated malls and rundown military bases, and culminate with a variety of comic minigames (Zombie Launch and Dumpster Dive among them). Completing minigames and gameplay challenges earns players badges that can be used as currency in the game's Pet Shop, which carries an assortment of zombie-care products to advance the health and customization of your charges. Ahhh, the circle of unlife. —**PATRICK C.**

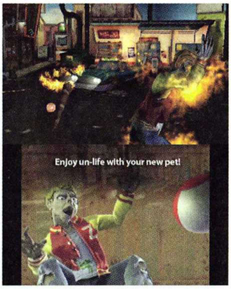
N3DS PUBLISHER: **MAJESCO**
DEVELOPER: **1ST PLAYABLE PRODUCTIONS**
RELEASE: **SEPTEMBER 2011**



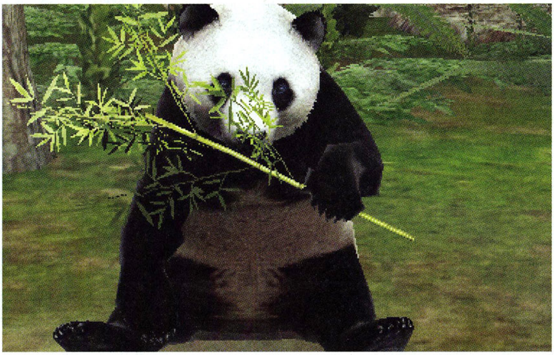
So you've decided to raise the undead.

Great!

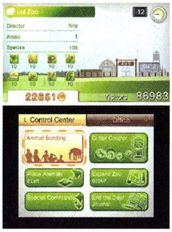
[Below] Unlike puppies, zombies don't mind when you launch them from a slingshot.

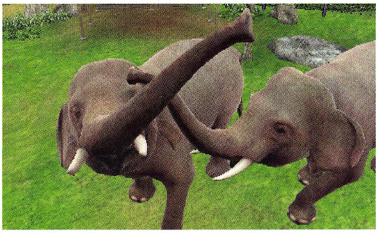


Enjoy un-life with your new pet!



[Above] Aren't pandas adorable when they're eating? If you take pictures like this, you'll get lots of visitors to your blog. [Below] These elephants are *way* nicer than the ones in Cave Story 3D.





ZOO RESORT

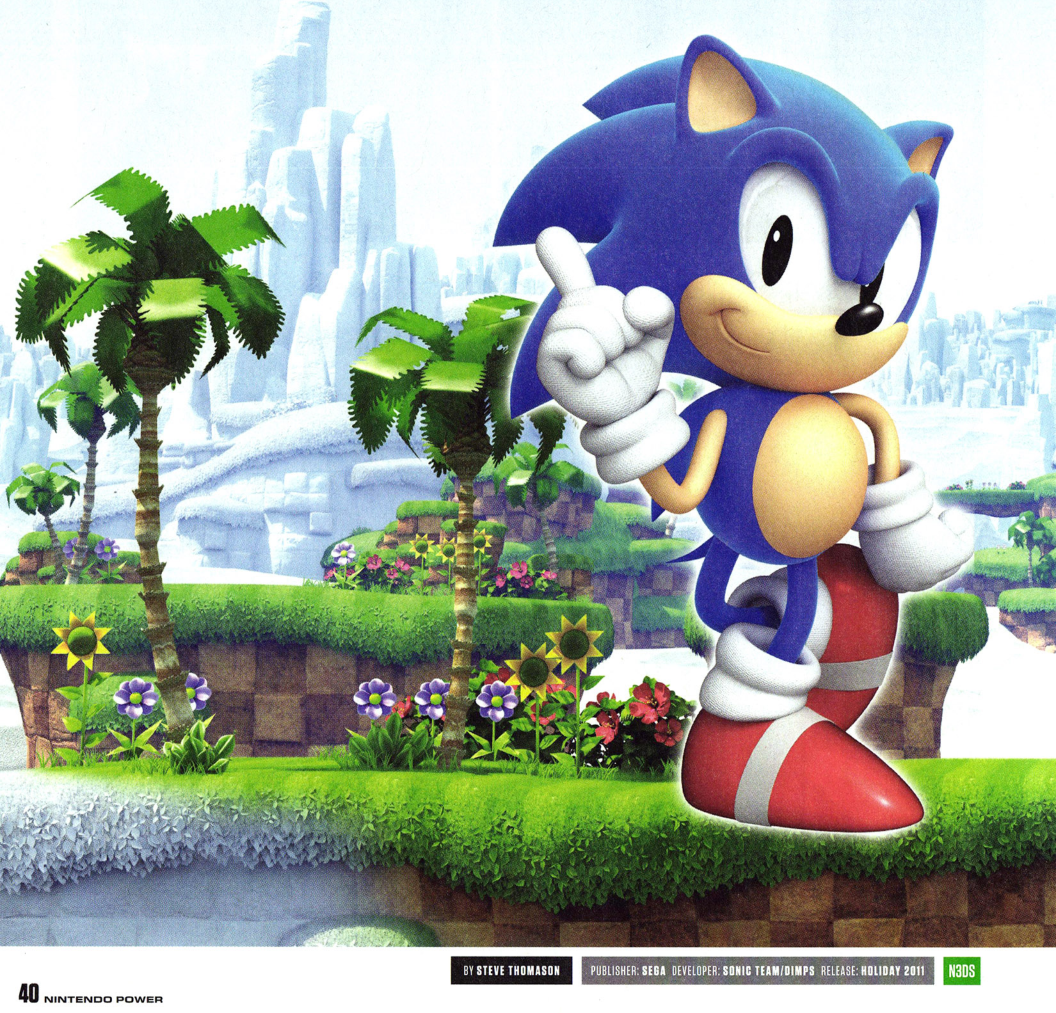
Constructing a successful zoo is a snap.

Previously known as Zoo Mania 3D, Zoo Resort has you rebuilding a zoo that you've inherited from your grandfather. To restore the wildlife park to its former glory, you must fill your zoo with as many animals as you can. (There are more than 100 types of animals in all.) Obtaining these creatures means spending Animal Points (AP)—you choose whether you want an herbivore (100 AP) or a carnivore (300 AP), then turn the dial on the toy-capsule-machine-like Animal Dispenser. A random beast will pop out and it can then be placed wherever you like in the menagerie. Simply having the animals is not enough to draw visitors (and thus earn AP), however; you have to advertise on your in-game blog by snapping pictures of your critters. The game makes use of the Nintendo 3DS system's gyro sensor, allowing you to physically move the handheld in order to get the perfect shot. —**JUSTIN C.**

N3DS PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **MARVELOUS ENTERTAINMENT/ AQ INTERACTIVE**
RELEASE: **JUNE 2011**

Best of Both Worlds

Do you prefer green eyes or potbellies? Traditional platforming or unbridled speed? With Sonic Generations, you don't have to choose.



BY **STEVE THOMASON**

PUBLISHER: **SEGA** DEVELOPER: **SONIC TEAM/DIMPS** RELEASE: **HOLIDAY 2011**

N3DS

Two decades is an eternity in video games, spanning more than half the history of the medium itself. That Sonic the Hedgehog remains a force to be reckoned with after so much time—despite a few trials and tribulations—puts the prickly speedster in elite company. To celebrate its mascot's big anniversary, Sega will tap his entire 20-year legacy for Sonic Generations. The Blue Blur's devoted followers may already know about Generations coming to Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3, but we're pleased to exclusively unveil a unique version headed to the Nintendo 3DS handheld.

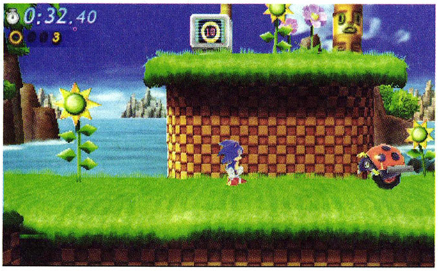
The core concept remains the same as in the console offerings, teaming modern-day Sonic—he of the green eyes and lanky frame—with his classic, pot-bellied self from 1991. The time-hopping duo revisits locales from throughout the franchise's history, and each zone comes in two different flavors to reflect our heroes' disparate play styles. With classic Sonic, you get a simplified, platforming-heavy approach akin to his original escapades on the Sega Genesis. That part of the equation holds true for every rendition of the game. But modern Sonic means something different on handhelds than it does on consoles. So whereas Generations for Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 features 3D gameplay for the present-day hedgehog, the N3DS game follows in the 2D footsteps of Sonic Rush. That makes for a significantly different experience on Nintendo's handheld, and certain fans will no doubt welcome the double dose of side-scrolling action. This take on Generations also deviates from its console siblings with a distinct collection of stages. Only on Nintendo 3DS will you be able to play Casino Night Zone from Sonic the Hedgehog 2, for example.

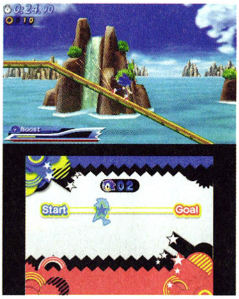
BLAST FROM THE PAST

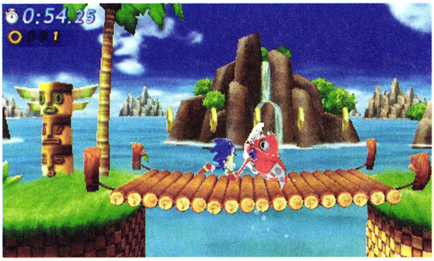
The one environment that appears in all versions of the game is the iconic Green Hill Zone. Our demo kicked off with the classic iteration of that stage, which is guaranteed to bring a smile to the face of anyone who sided with Sega during the 16-bit wars. From the familiar checkerboard pattern to Masato Nakamura's fiendishly catchy theme music, it's like an injection of pure nostalgia; an instant reminder of what made this series so special in the first place.

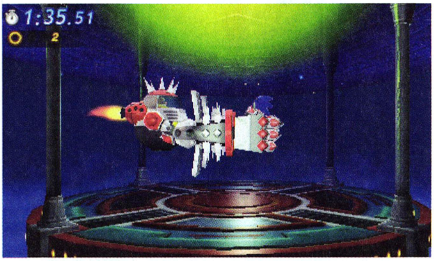
For many of us, a big part of that is Sonic's original character design. His pot-bellied form has a timeless quality reminiscent of classic cartoons like Mickey Mouse and Felix the Cat, and the way he moves is very expressive, conveying his personality without the need for him to utter a single word. Generations meticulously preserves all of that, right down to the way Sonic taps his foot impatiently (and eventually lies down) if you leave him idle for too long.

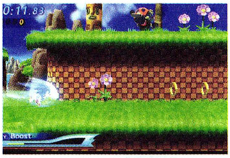
The gameplay is slavishly faithful to the Genesis era, as well—to a much greater extent than was the recent Sonic the Hedgehog 4. The physics feel a lot more authentic, providing Sega's fleet-footed mascot with a real sense of momentum, and aside from running and jumping, his only move is the Spin Dash. Sonic even has to hop onto spring pads rather

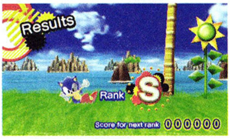


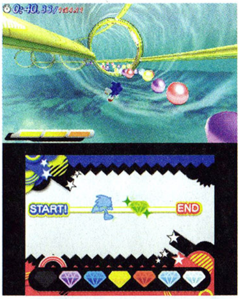












[Above right] Continuing series tradition, Sonic Generations will include bonus stages that reward you with Chaos Emeralds. Further details remain under wraps.

than simply run into them, just like in the old days. Perhaps most importantly, the level design puts as much emphasis on platforming as it does on speed, and that classic formula has aged extremely well. Though all of the environments come from previous titles, the stages themselves are entirely new in terms of layout. So we're getting a fresh dose of vintage Sonic action for the first time in more than 16 years.

Also new, of course, is stereoscopic 3D. Its use is more restrained here than in modern Sonic's sections (more on that shortly), but the effect really causes the enemies to pop and lends a great feeling of depth to the multilayered backgrounds.

CURRENT AFFAIR

We also went hands-on with the modern iteration of Green Hill Zone, and as touched on previously, it plays a lot like Sonic Rush, or like the Nintendo DS version of Sonic Colors. The action is more kinetic than in the classic stages, pushing you to keep our hero moving as fast as possible at all times. To facilitate that, the Blue Blur has his full repertoire of contemporary moves. He can grind rails, slide under obstacles, jump off walls, use a homing attack, and collect rings to fill his boost gauge. In keeping with recent Sonic games, the level is also packed with extra "gimmicks" like ziplines and dash pads.

Aestheticially, there aren't any major differences between the two versions of Green Hill Zone, but the modern take on the stage does feature a jazzy remix of the original tune. Jun Senoue and his music team are taking that same approach throughout, crafting modern remixes of classic tracks and vice versa. So in a locale that hails from one of Sonic's Dreamcast adventures, for instance, the modern version of the stage

MIX MAESTRO

Jun Senoue has been composing music for Sega's premier franchise since Sonic the Hedgehog 3. That experience should serve him well as he heads the effort to remix tracks from throughout the hedgehog's history. We recently caught up with him for a brief discussion about this unique undertaking.

NINTENDO POWER What's been your approach to remixing the classic tracks? Do you approach each one differently or is there sort of an overriding philosophy driving your work on the game?

JUN SENOUE The music from the Green Hill Zone left a powerful impression on a lot of people, myself included, so I felt that fans might be disturbed if we messed with that track's melody or tempo. I wanted it to have a classic, nostalgic feel, but with a few original touches, so I took the original Genesis track and sort of decorated around it. As a result, it's fundamentally the same music, and you can still hear all the familiar phrases.

Arranging the tracks for the modern style was an entirely different challenge, as Mr. Nakamura had never allowed us to change the tracks from the first two games before. There weren't too many structural elements to the original tracks, and as a result, there aren't many extraneous parts. I felt that the beginning and melody of each track were the most memorable parts, and tried to re-create those as clearly as possible. In the specific case of the Green Hill Zone, I didn't think the tempo of the music was a good fit with the running speed used in the modern style of gameplay, so I came up with a structure that could seamlessly switch between two versions of the track that have the same melody, but different rhythm tracks.

To your mind, what's the difference between a good remix and a bad remix?

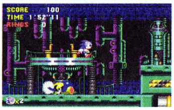
I like remixes where the most memorable parts of the original track are preserved, but the arranger adds his own distinctive style to the track. The remixes I don't like are the ones that just elongate the tracks by repeating the same musical phrases over and over. I guess the difference is that in the former case, the arranger has a set goal that he's trying to achieve.

Are you collaborating with anyone on this project?

I'm working with several different people on the music for Sonic Generations. Each brings something different and unique to the music, yet will be something the fans will most certainly recognize as soon as they hear the tracks. I cannot mention at this time what each person is working on specifically, but I hope the fans will enjoy the reimagined tracks.

MOST-WANTED DESTINATIONS

Thus far, Sega has divulged the identity of only two worlds for Sonic Generations—Green Hill Zone from the original Sonic the Hedgehog and Casino Night Zone from Sonic the Hedgehog 2. If they asked us to put together the rest of the game's itinerary, we would probably start with the following.

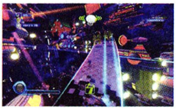


Metallic Madness
Sonic CD

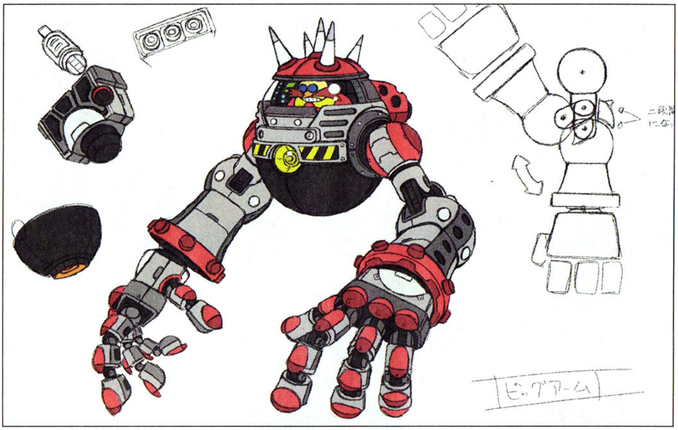
Death Egg Zone
Sonic & Knuckles

Emerald Coast
Sonic Adventure

Dinosaur Jungle
Sonic and the Secret Rings



Starlight Carnival
Sonic Colors

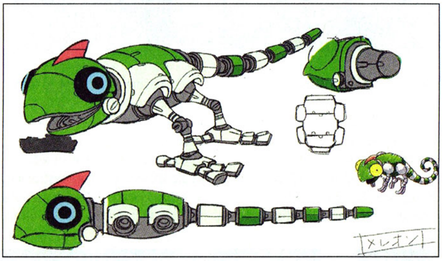


Anyone who builds robots this impressive deserves better than to be called "Dr. Eggman."

will feature authentic music and the classic version will get a remix. We've heard only a handful of tracks thus far, but they all sounded fantastic. (For more on the music, check out our brief interview with Senoue in the "Mix Maestro" sidebar.)

As the modern Green Hill Zone winds to a close, Sonic must smash through the bottom section of a ginormous totem pole. The camera swings around in front of the hedgehog afterwards to show the rest of the totem toppling right behind him. It's an impressive spectacle that really highlights the 3D effect, as does modern Sonic's ability to occasionally move between the foreground and background.

The Sonic Rush games have their detractors, but we've always enjoyed this style of gameplay. Don't get us wrong—16-bit Sonic will always reign supreme in our eyes. But having that variety in Generations offers a nice change of pace.

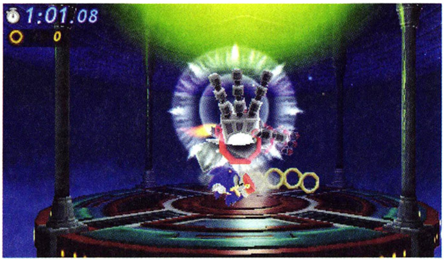


DOCTOR'S VISIT

Our demo concluded with a battle against a giant, floating robot dubbed Big Arm. Astute Sonic fans may recognize it as one of Dr. Robotnik's creations from Sonic the Hedgehog 3, which seems to confirm that the bosses will be culled from the Blue Blur's past. The good doctor once again mans the controls, and if you look closely, you can see that he appears in his classically rotund form from the Genesis games. He pilots the craft a bit differently than he did in 1994, though, occasionally rotating into the background and thrusting Big Arm's big fists toward you in 3D.

According to Sega, all of the bosses will be unique to the Nintendo 3DS version of Generations. You'll fight some of them—like Big Arm—with vintage Sonic and others with the present-day hedgehog. Also exclusive to the handheld game are special challenges that you can unlock via StreetPass or Play Coins, as well as a two-player race mode via local wireless. Perhaps the latter will let us settle once and for all which version of Sonic is better. (Our money's on the 'hog with Blast Processing.)

Whatever your preference when it comes to Sega's hasty hero, Sonic Generations seems poised to deliver. After 20 years, pleasing fans both new and old just might be Sonic's biggest accomplishment yet.



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Master of Ceremonies

On the eve of Sonic's big anniversary bash, we chat with the man in charge—franchise producer and Sonic Team head Takashi Iizuka—about the hedgehog's past, present, and future.

NINTENDO POWER What was the inspiration for the core idea behind Sonic Generations—to revisit stages from throughout the history of the series as both classic Sonic and modern Sonic?

TAKASHI IIZUKA When we started thinking about creating a 20th-anniversary title, we decided that instead of simply releasing another new action game, we wanted to make a game that could *only* be done on such a special occasion. Once we made that decision, we began to think about how we could condense all 20 years of Sonic history into a single game.

Can you tell us a little bit about the story behind the game and how the two Sonics have come to team up? Does the Nintendo 3DS game follow the same story as the console versions?

A mysterious life form—which is a new enemy in the game—erased time and space, sending modern-day Sonic back to the past. That allowed modern Sonic to meet his own past self. There are some differences in the story between the console and N3DS versions, but they're fundamentally the same.

Why did you want to bring back the classic Sonic gameplay? What do you think it offers that modern Sonic games have not?

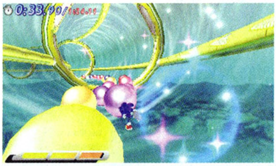
Recent Sonic titles on handhelds, such as Sonic Rush and the DS version of Sonic Colors, have offered speedy action with the ability to use the Sonic Boost feature. However, they've evolved into a different sort of game than the platform-action Sonic titles of the Genesis era. Of course, we love the Rush and Colors titles, but we're also fond of the tight, single-button, platform-action style of gameplay. In the Nintendo 3DS version of Generations, we've allowed players to play both styles and enjoy their respective merits.

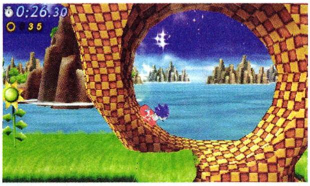
What was the selection process for choosing which stages to revisit?

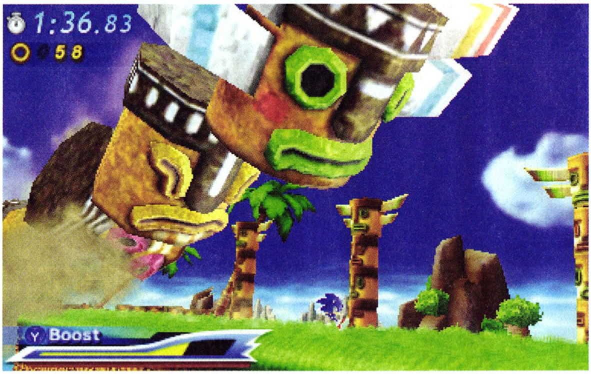
We discussed it internally, as well as with the staff at Sega of America and Sega of Europe. We also did extensive online research, and conducted polls on which classic Sonic stages were the most popular. From all of that, we made a list of the most popular stages and divvied them up between the N3DS and console versions so that both games would offer a unique selection.

The console versions of the game feature 3D sections for modern Sonic, with the hedgehog running into the screen. Why did you opt for a different approach with the Nintendo 3DS version?

From the start of the project, the concept was to bring Genesis-era Sonic and present-day Sonic together. On consoles, modern-day Sonic is best represented by 3D-action games like Sonic Colors, which switch between side-view and head-on 3D perspectives. On handheld platforms, on the other hand, modern-day Sonic is represented by games like Sonic Rush and Sonic Colors, where Sonic uses the Sonic Boost feature to run at high speeds. That's why we decided to use that style of gameplay for the handheld version.







Who is the director for Sonic Generations on Nintendo 3DS? Is this primarily a Dimps project or are members of Sonic Team working on the N3DS version as well?
The director is Tetsu Katano, who directed Sonic and the Black Knight. *[Editor's note: Katano was also the main programmer on the Sonic Adventure titles.]* Sonic Team and Dimps are codeveloping the title.

When it comes to the classic Sonic sections, one thing that hardcore fans are sure to scrutinize is the physics engine. How has the team approached that aspect of the game?
This is our first title on the Nintendo 3DS platform, so we're developing the physics completely from scratch.

Will other characters from the series make an appearance besides Sonic and Dr. Eggman?
The console versions of Generations will feature a large cast of characters, but the N3DS version will only have the ones who are integral to the story.

Many longtime fans are excited to see pot-bellied Sonic back in action. Why do you think there's still so much enthusiasm for that original character design after all these years?
Back in the Genesis days, Sonic the Hedgehog was such a big hit that it even drove hardware sales. The game itself was an industry sensation 20 years ago, and it had a huge impact on many video game fans of the era, myself included. I think there are a lot of people who want to see a continuation of the Sonic games from that era, just the way they used to be.

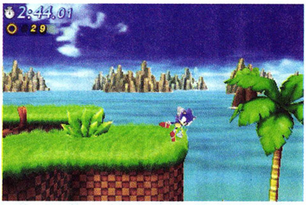
Last year's Sonic Colors was well received by critics and audiences alike. Did the team take away any lessons from that success?
I think there were a lot of features, such as the Color powers, that were well-received by the audience, and by me, frankly. But in terms of the lesson we considered while making Sonic Generations, I'd have to say that it was making a well-paced action game, in which the pure action experience—rather than the story— is the central focus. That style of game design is reflected in Sonic Generations as well.

0:15.60
8
Y Boost

Given the success of Sonic Colors, why isn't Sonic Generations coming to Wii?
The primary goal for the console versions of Generations was reimagining the series's classic zones in vivid, high-definition graphics. The Wii hardware wasn't a good fit for that concept, so we abandoned development on that, and decided that for our Nintendo audience, we would make a fresh start with a N3DS version of Generations.

Switching gears to the broader Sonic universe, how is development on Sonic the Hedgehog 4: Episode 2 progressing? Was there any fan feedback from Episode 1 that you're looking to address for subsequent episodes?
We received all sorts of feedback from Episode 1, and are incorporating much of it into the development of Episode 2.

Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games has been a huge success and another installment is due later this year. Obviously, many fans of those two beloved mascots would also love to see them team up for an action-platformer. Is that something you'd like to see, as well?
It took a huge event like the Olympics to make it possible to bring Mario and Sonic together. While I'm personally interested in bringing various characters together for a crossover game outside of the framework of a sporting event, I don't think we'll be being seeing Mario and Sonic costarring in a game outside of the Olympics.



[Above] Pot-bellied Sonic brings back all of his classic animations from the good old days. Welcome back, buddy!

You first started on the series way back with Sonic 3. What was that experience like? And was there anything you learned from working with Yuji Naka and Hirokazu Yasuhara that you still carry with you today?
Back then, starting from square one, they taught me everything about who Sonic was and how to make Sonic games, and what Sonic is and isn't about. I've learned so many things from them that if I started listing them all, I might never be able to stop!

Besides yourself and Jun Senoue, is there anyone else still at Sonic Team who contributed to any of the Genesis games?
There are still a few, like Kazuyuki Hoshino, who designed Metal Sonic. Also, Yuji Uekawa, who was the character designer for Ristar, is now the current Sonic illustrator.

What's your fondest memory of working on the Sonic series? And conversely, what was the greatest challenge you had to overcome?
For my fondest memory, well, this may not be the sort of answer you were looking for, but my involvement with the Sonic series has allowed me to see the world. That includes living in the United States, traveling to Europe, and visiting ruins in South America.

My greatest challenge would have to be the development of Sonic Adventure for the Dreamcast. Development of the game overlapped with the development of the hardware itself, and it was the toughest time we've ever had getting a game finished on schedule. The game was huge, it was being made for a platform that wasn't even 100% finished yet, and it was our first time developing a Sonic game in 3D. To overcome all those challenges, we turned to a number of other departments for help, and by the end of the project we had over 100 people working on the title.

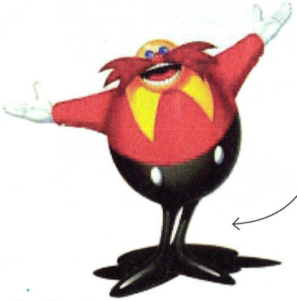
Twenty years is a long time. Why do you think Sonic has endured while other popular characters have fallen by the wayside?
We owe it to the fans that have supported Sonic for such a long time. For our part, I believe it's because we're always releasing new titles that provide surprises and fresh experiences for those fans.

20 Things We Love About Sonic the Hedgehog...

The original Sonic the Hedgehog was released on June 23, 1991. Since then, Sega's mascot has become one of the most recognizable characters in the world and has sold more than 75 million video games. Sure, he's experienced his fair share of trials and tribulations over the past two decades, but we still love the little guy. Here are 20 reasons why.

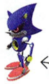
Memorable Music

Starting with the opening title screen for the very first game, this series has always featured tunes that crawl into your head and stick with you forever. Rumor has it that even Michael Jackson has contributed to that legacy.



Dr. Robotnik

Sonic's longtime adversary has everything you could want from an iconic villain. He possesses an IQ of 300, sports an even more impressive mustache, and turns adorable woodland creatures into killer robots.



Metal Sonic

We know Shadow is popular with the kids, but we still prefer Metal Sonic as the Blue Blur's dark counterpart. He's just a heck of a lot cooler without trying so hard.

Speed

Everybody loves to go fast; perhaps no one more so than Sonic cocreator and self-proclaimed Ferrari fanatic Yuji Naka. It was Naka's idea to create a mascot characterized by speed and his legendary programming skills that made it possible.

SCORE 100
TIME 0:18''18
RINGS 16

Time Travel

One of the few reasons to own the CD add-on for the Sega Genesis, Sonic CD had an awesome time-travel mechanic that took the franchise's concept of multiple routes to the next level. Time travel also seems to play a role in Sonic Generations.

Great Platforming

Despite widespread notions to the contrary, however, speed's not all Sonic has going for him. He's actually at his best when there's some good old-fashioned platforming involved. (See the 16-bit games and Sonic Colors.)

Bonus Stages

Any self-respecting fan knows that you haven't truly finished a Sonic game until you've mastered the (often-devious) bonus stages and collected all seven Chaos Emeralds. It's been a series tradition since the very beginning.

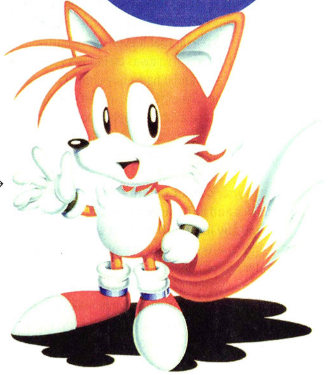
Portable Success

Admittedly, his Game Gear titles weren't very good. But Sonic has had a nice run on handhelds ever since—from Sonic Pocket Adventure for the Neo Geo Pocket Color to the Sonic Rush games for Nintendo DS.

GENESIS
16-BIT

The 16-Bit Wars

It wasn't until Sonic the Hedgehog debuted that the Sega Genesis really took off and provided Nintendo with its first legitimate rival in the home video game market. The competition that ensued took the industry to new heights.



Tails

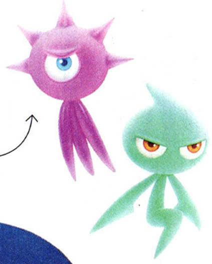
The Blue Blur's entourage has grown far too bloated in recent years, but we still have a soft spot for Miles "Tails" Prower (despite that freakish mutation). His lovable dorkiness is a nice counterbalance to Sonic's attitude.

Assorted Weirdness

Sonic's universe gives the Mushroom Kingdom a run for its money when it comes to bizarre stuff. The real world would no doubt be a better place if entire nations were made of giant donuts and smashing computer monitors earned you gold rings.

Wisps

Sonic Colors was the hedgehog's best outing in quite some time, and the Wisp power-ups were a big reason why. The game was a success both critically and commercially, so hopefully we'll get a sequel someday.



SCORE 0
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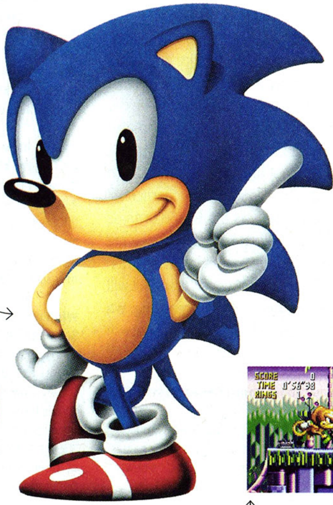
SONIC × 3

Death Egg

Robotnik's mustachioed take on the *Death Star* was the centerpiece of a saga that spanned from Sonic the Hedgehog 2 to Sonic & Knuckles—arguably the pinnacle of the franchise.

Pot Belly

There's something incredibly endearing about Sonic's original pudgy design. The man responsible for it—Naoto Ohshima—went on to become a director at Sonic Team, helming Sonic CD and NiGHTS into Dreams. He now heads independent developer Arzest, which recently contributed to Wii Play: Motion.



Spin Dash

The Spin Dash was the first move that Sonic added to his repertoire, and it's still our favorite. It looks cool, it makes a neat sound, and it lets him smash through walls like Kool-Aid Man. What more could you ask for?

Sound Effects

Jumping. Picking up rings. Swallowing air bubbles. Sonic fans can hear the sounds for every one of those actions in their heads right now. Only Mario and Pac-Man rival that kind of familiarity.

Chase Scenes

What good's a character that runs really fast if he doesn't have stuff chasing him from time to time? Over the years, his pursuers have included everything from avanlanches to killer whales to stampeding triceratops.

302%
MARIO
300%
SONIC

Punching Mario

The moment Segaphiles had been waiting for finally arrived with Sonic's inclusion in Super Smash Bros. Brawl. Sure he and Mario are friendly now, but there is still something cathartic about watching these once-bitter rivals clock each other in the face.

SCORE 0
TIME 0'58"98
RINGS

Experimentation

Though their efforts haven't always been successful, we appreciate the fact that Sega is willing to experiment with Sonic and try new things. Stuff like Knuckles' Chaotix and Sonic and the Secret Rings prevents the franchise from growing stale, even after two decades.

Lock-on Technology

So what if it was the result of Sonic Team missing their deadline for Sonic 3? The ability to physically connect that game with the Sonic & Knuckles cartridge, thus unlocking all sorts of new content, was like a revelation at the time. And for many fans, the resulting "Sonic 3 & Knuckles" remains an all-time favorite.

...And 5 We Don't

So about those trials and tribulations...

Bad Gimmicks

Was anyone really clamoring for Sonic to turn into a werehog or wield a sword? Fortunately, the days of Sega feeling compelled to saddle every Sonic game with some overwrought gimmick seem to be behind us.

Sonic the Hedgehog (2006 vesion)

Forget the fact that the game is an utterly broken mess that would embarrass even lesser mascots like Bubsy. Its real crime is forever burdening us with the image of an anthropomorphic hedgehog kissing a human girl. We can't scrub our brains, Sega!

Guns and Motorcycles

Yes, Shadow, we get it. You're a badass. But can you please trade in that chopper for a hybrid? You're ruining our blue skies.

Bad Dialogue and Voice Acting

Lots of games have suspect dialogue, but the Sonic franchise makes Saturday-morning cartoons sound like Shakespeare. At least things improved a little bit with Sonic Colors.

Big the Cat

We hate you, Big. Die in a fire, and take Froggy with you.

Genesis Does

The Sonic anniversary bash continues with Archie Comics's Sonic: Genesis storyline.

The *Sonic the Hedgehog* comic-book series, going strong since 1993, is undoubtedly one of the most successful examples of video games crossing over into other media. And while Sonic and his pals have been on many comic-book adventures over the years, this summer's Sonic: Genesis storyline, which coincides with Sonic's 20th anniversary, promises to be the most exciting yet. Written by Ian Flynn and drawn by Patrick "Spaz" Spaziante (who also comprise the creative team behind the new Mega Man comic), the story begins with the dramatic return of Dr. Robotnik. The evil scientist's latest plan not only results in the death of a major Sonic character, but causes the entire Sonic universe—and all the characters' memories—to be "reset." The result is a celebration of Sonic's past, as the Blue Blur finds himself rediscovering his friends and reliving the events of the original Sonic the Hedgehog game, including ventures into classic locales such as the Labyrinth Zone and Scrap Brain Zone, and the retro goodness continues from there. Though the Sonic: Genesis story arc will last only four issues (#226 through #229), the repercussions promise to be far-reaching. We recently spoke to Flynn to find out more about this epic tale, as well an upcoming story in issue #230 based on Sonic Generations. —CHRIS H.

NINTENDO POWER What made you decide upon this particular storyline as the best way to celebrate Sonic's 20th anniversary?

IAN FLYNN We already had major plans for our 225th issue, which is a milestone in and of itself. The fact it coincided with the franchise's 20th anniversary meant we had to do something *extra* special to honor the Sonic planets aligning. Given the direction of the next Sonic game, the temporary reboot seemed like the best way to both push our story forward and to capitalize on the classic Sonic love.

Why did you choose Sonic: Genesis as the title for the story?

It was in part in honor of the Sega Genesis console, which hosted the most beloved of the Sonic games. Another aspect is that "genesis" suggests a new beginning, which is just what this story will be.

What are the differences between this rebooted world and the regular Sonic continuity?

It's a clean slate. The years of world history—from the echidna civilizations to the Acorn monarchy to the Great War—don't apply anymore. We start with Sonic on an adventure to figure out why animals are disappearing and robots are taking their place. That said, there will be a lot of little hints to veteran readers that this reboot isn't exactly what is seems to be on the surface.

From the looks of things, the first half of the story arc takes a lot of cues from the original Sonic the Hedgehog game. Will the following issues be based on Sonic 2 and 3? Will Tails and Knuckles show up?

The first half is from the original Sonic while the second half takes its set pieces from Sonic the Hedgehog 2. We won't be getting into Sonic 3 and Sonic & Knuckles, which could easily be an arc all by itself. Tails will definitely be showing up.

Did you have to change your approach to writing the characters in the rebooted universe? If so, how?

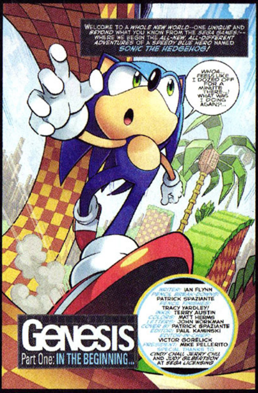
A little bit. The character relationships we take for granted are gone now. Tails is still in his early hero-worship days, and any other familiar faces will be meeting Sonic for the first time. It'll be both new and familiar all at once.

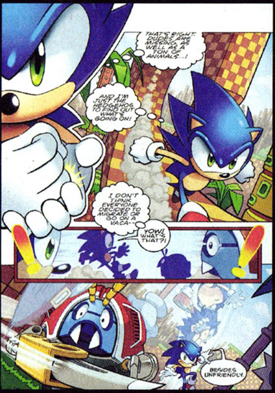
What was the collaborative process with Sega like for this story arc? Was it any different than usual?

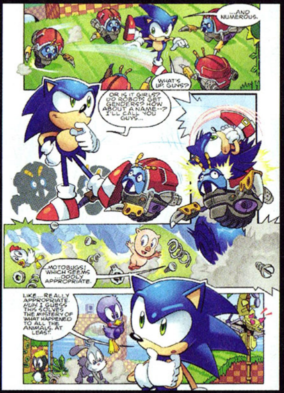
There was a lot of discussion on where to take the arc, how long it should be, and how heavily it should be influenced by the games both past and upcoming. In the end we settled on the four-part "Genesis" arc you'll be seeing soon, capped off at the end with a tie-in for the upcoming Sonic Generations game.

Why would you consider this a good jumping-on point for new readers?

Because this is a self-contained, continuity-lite bundle of easily accessible Sonic goodness. It's


WELCOME TO A WHOLE NEW WORLD--ONE UNIQUE AND BEYOND WHAT YOU KNOW FROM THE SEGA GAMES!--WHERE WE BEGIN THE ALL-NEW, ALL-DIFFERENT ADVENTURES OF A SPEEDY BLUE HERO NAMED SONIC THE HEDGEHOG!
WHOA... FEELS LIKE I DOZED OFF FOR A MINUTE THERE...! WHAT WAS I DOING AGAIN?...
GENESIS
Part One: IN THE BEGINNING...
WRITER: IAN FLYNN
PENCIL BREAK-DOWNS: PATRICK SPAZIANTE
PENCIL FINISHES: TRACY YARDLEY!
INKS: TERRY AUSTIN
COLORS: MATT HERMS
LETTERS: JOHN WORKMAN
COVER BY PATRICK SPAZIANTE
EDITOR: PAUL KAMINSKI
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: VICTOR GORELICK
PRESIDENT: MIKE PELLERITO
SPECIAL THANKS TO CINDY CHAU, JERRY CHU, AND JUDY GILBERTSON AT SEGA LICENSING


THAT'S RIGHT. DUDES ARE MISSING, AS WELL AS A TON OF ANIMALS...!
AND I'M JUST THE HEDGEHOG TO FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON!
I DON'T THINK EVERYONE DECIDED TO MIGRATE OR GO ON A VACA--
YOW! WHAT'S THAT?!
BESIDES UNFRIENDLY.

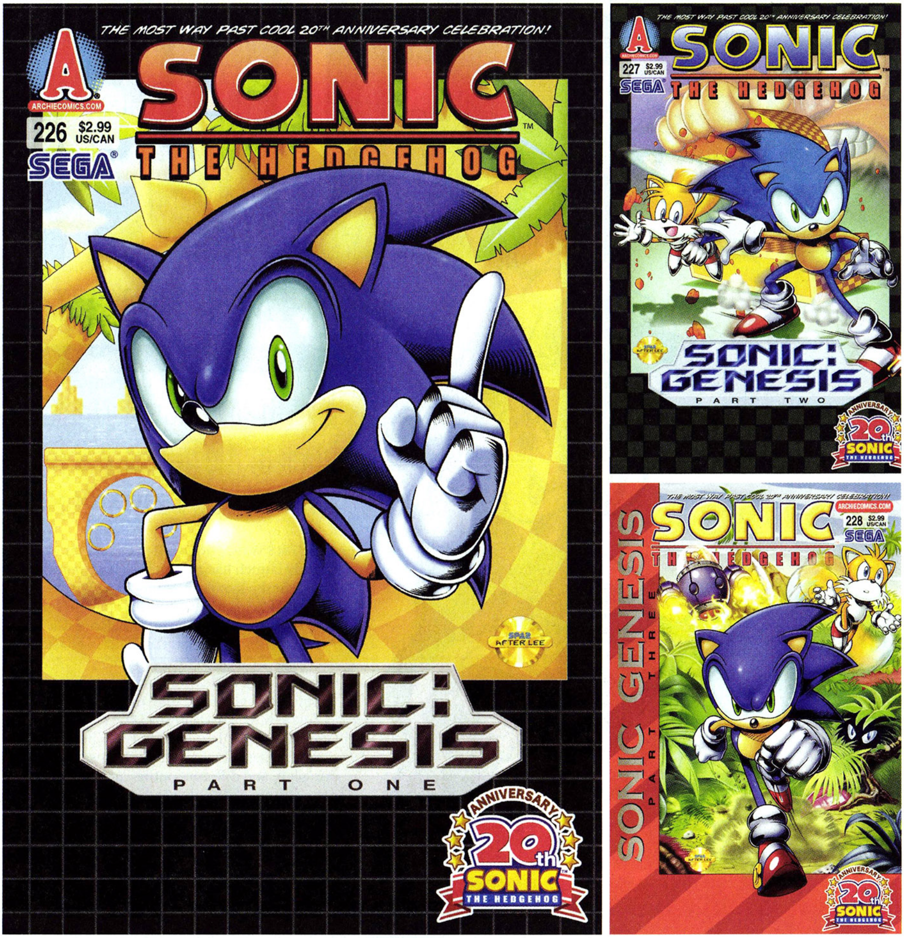

...AND NUMEROUS.
WHAT'S UP, GUYS?
OR IS IT GIRLS? DO ROBOTS GET GENDERS? HOW ABOUT A NAME--? I'LL CALL YOU GUYS...
...MOTOBUGS! WHICH SEEMS ...ODDLY APPROPRIATE.
LIKE... REALLY APPROPRIATE. HUH. I GUESS THIS SOLVES THE MYSTERY OF WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THE ANIMALS, AT LEAST.

Sonic at his most basic and recognizable: bopping badniks, foiling Dr. Eggman, and saving his animal buddies. Veteran readers will have plenty of nuances to enjoy, but the Sonic novice should feel right at home.

How is this story going to have a lasting impact on the Sonic comic universe?
I can't reveal too much about that yet. Dr. Eggman is working with incredibly volatile powers in a very haphazard way. Once Genesis is over, the fallout will continue to affect characters and plots in the book for at least a year to come.

What can you tell us about the Sonic Generations comic that will be included in issue 230?
Like our last few tie-ins, it'll follow the "Another Time, Another Place" format so continuity buffs can place it safely in the category of "a different dimension" while enjoying the story. We'll be adapting the intro from the game, and then letting you enjoy the full experience in the game itself.

Given the Sonic comics have outlasted any other video game comic by far, what do you think the secret is to Sonic's success?
For all the characters and lore the comic has built up over the years, the core story remains one dashing hero fighting against evil as stylishly as possible. People like the colorful, enjoyable and accessible characters, the adventures they have, and the trouble they get into. The comics have taken on elements of each spin-off the franchise has experienced, bringing a little something to the table for every Sonic fan to enjoy.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SONIC GENESIS PART THREE

These retro-inspired covers for the Sonic: Genesis story are what you might consider "way past cool." *Sonic the Hedgehog* editor Paul Kaminski explains the idea behind the designs: "Cover artist Patrick 'Spaz' Spaziante and I were going over cover ideas for the arc and thought it'd be a fun idea to take the 'Genesis' title and push it further. I mean, with a title like Sonic: Genesis, it would've been silly not to invoke the original game box art on the covers!"

The Greatest Moments of

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

GAME BOY ERA

A 25th-anniversary look back at the moments that defined Link's adventures.

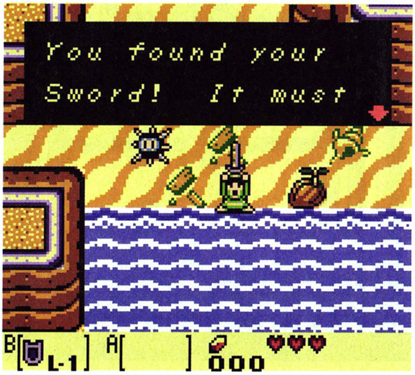
PLAYERS WHO GRABBED a Game Boy at its 1989 launch had to wait four long years for the first portable installment in The Legend of Zelda series, but their patience was well rewarded; The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening was so good that it's still considered to be one of the best entries in the franchise. The original black-and-white version of the game was given a color upgrade—titled The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening DX—when the Game Boy Color launched in 1998. Its improved graphics, new photography side quest, new dungeon, and different outfits make it the ultimate edition of the game, which is why we've chosen to feature it here. Link's Awakening is the last of what we would call Link's "classic" adventures, and with it, our recurring look back at the early days of the series comes to a close.

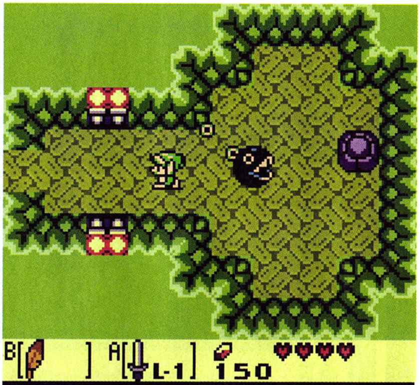
A word of warning, though: This reminiscence includes a major plot twist. If you've somehow missed out on playing this game—or if you're waiting to experience it on the Nintendo 3DS system via the Nintendo eShop—do yourself a favor and avoid the spoilers until you get to witness them yourself.

BY **PHIL THEOBALD**

Reclaiming Your Sword

For the first time, Hyrule was not the setting for a Zelda adventure. Instead, this game begins with Link trapped in a storm at sea. After lighting strikes his boat, he washes up on the shore of Koholint Island. There he meets a young girl named Marin and her father, Tarin. After these newfound friends nurse Link back to health, our hero ventures off to reclaim his sword, which rests on the shore among the shattered remains of his ship. Before he grabs the weapon, however, a mysterious owl appears and informs Link that there is no escape from Koholint unless a being called the Wind Fish is awakened. With that, Link recovers his sword and a celebratory musical fanfare transitions into the classic Zelda overworld theme. This brief moment lets you know that you're in for an epic quest.


You found your Sword! It must



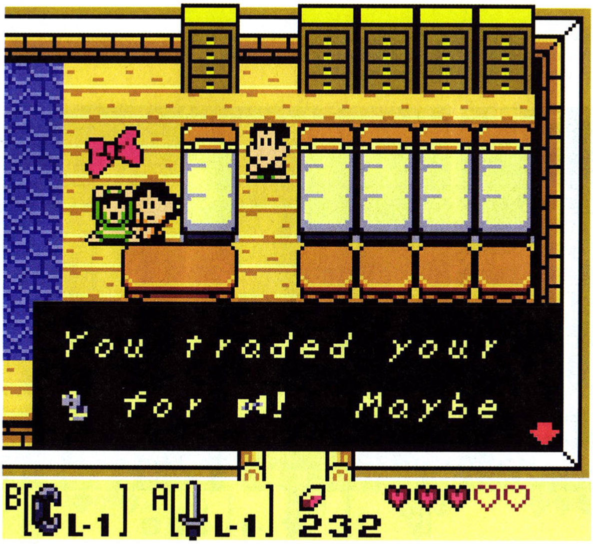
Walking the...Dog?

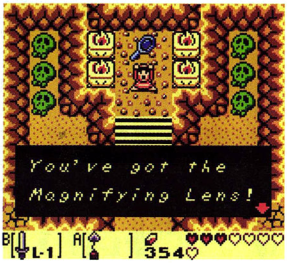
One of Link's earliest missions in the game is to reclaim the oddly named Madam MeowMeow's kidnapped pet, Bow-Wow (clearly inspired by the Mario series's Chain Chomps), from a gang of Moblins. Upon saving the pet, Madam MeowMeow asks Link to take him for a walk. Although it might sound like a chore, Link soon discovers that Bow-Wow is great for attacking enemies and devouring the Goponga Flowers that block the entrance to the game's second dungeon, Bottle Grotto.

* * *

Swap Meet

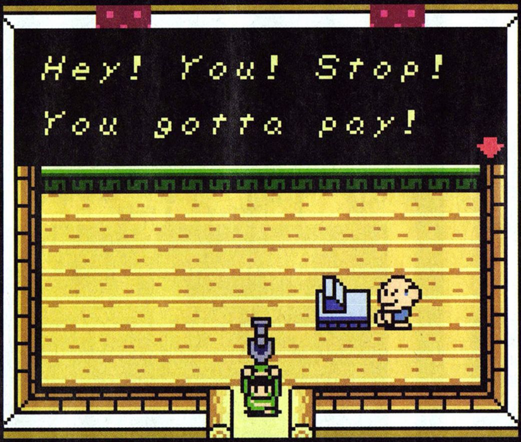
Zelda games often feature trading sequences—lengthy side quests that require Link to track down all sorts of people and swap items with them. These quests usually result in Link getting a valuable reward at the end. Did you know that this series staple originated in Link's Awakening? It all begins when Link wins a Yoshi doll from the Trendy Game Shop. After a few clever trades, Link ends up with the Magnifying Lens. This device lets Link see a hidden Goriya that will offer up a boomerang for trade and it lets Link read a book in the library that reveals a secret path to the Wind Fish.


You traded your for ! Maybe

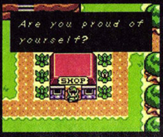

You've got the Magnifying Lens!

Five-Fingered Discount

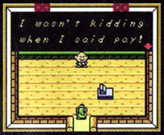
Stealing is bad. This is a lesson that Link learns the hard way if he decides to be dishonest at the shop in Mabe Village. If Link is quick (and if the shopkeeper's back is turned), he can pick up an item in the shop and walk out without paying. If you return to the shop after the thievery, though, the shopkeeper blasts Link with a magical spell that kills Link instantly—a harsh punishment. It seems that the townsfolk of Koholint are also wary of criminals. When you restart your game, everyone refers to Link as THIEF.



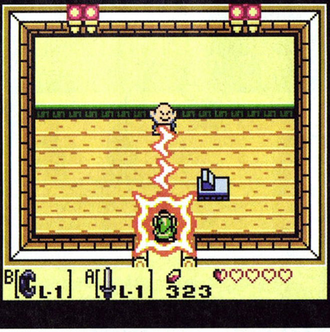
Hey! You! Stop!
You gotta pay!



Are you proud of
yourself?

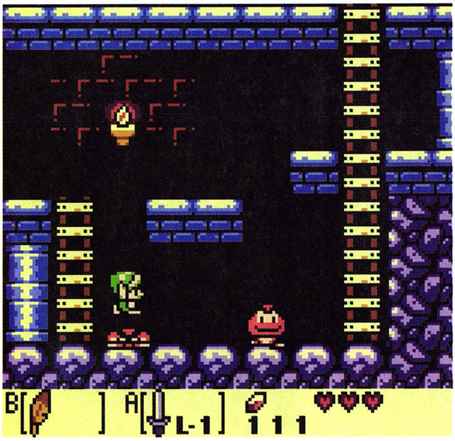


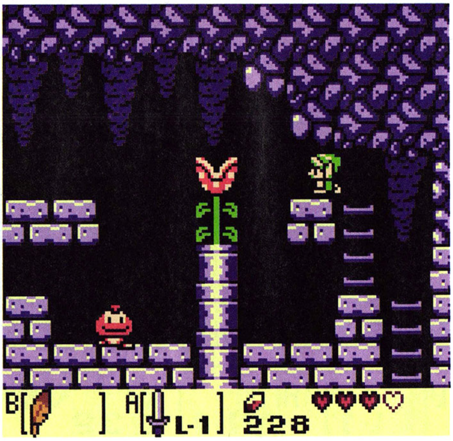
I wasn't kidding
when I said pay!

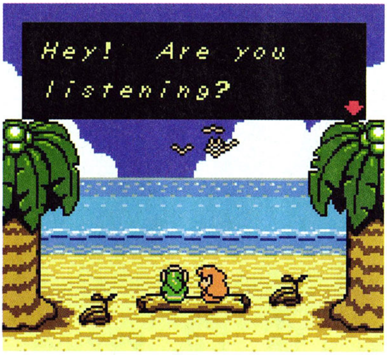


Super Linkio Brothers

Bow-Wow isn't the only sign of a Mario Bros. influence on Koholint Island. The land is practically crawling with references to the franchise. During his adventure, Link will face off against Piranha Plants, Thwomps, Boos, Pokeys, Cheep-Cheeps, and Shy Guys. With the Roc's Feather equipped, Link can even stomp on a few Goombas. There are plenty of other Mario homages, so observant players will be rewarded.



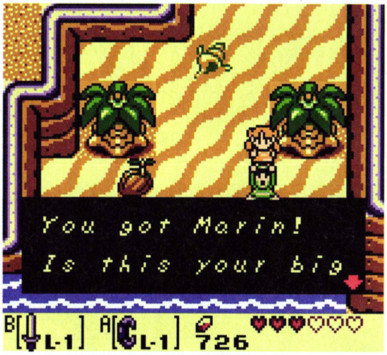




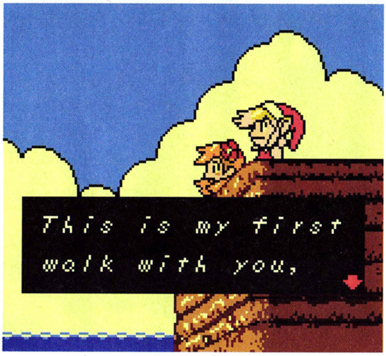
Hey! Are you listening?

Seaside Romance

When it comes to romance, Link is associated with Princess Zelda. However, the two have never been a true couple. In fact, on Koholint Island Link quickly finds himself falling for Marin, who clearly reciprocates his feelings. Their relationship culminates in a touching scene on the beach where the two almost, but not quite, confess their feelings for each other.



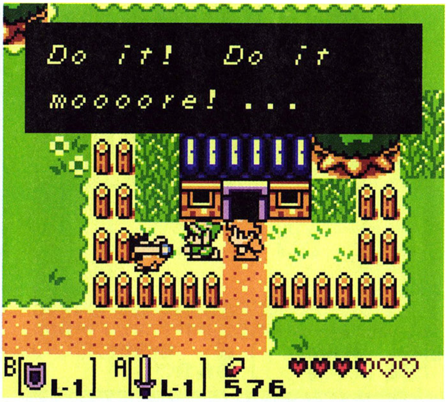
You got Marin! Is this your big



This is my first walk with you,

Marin's Dark Side

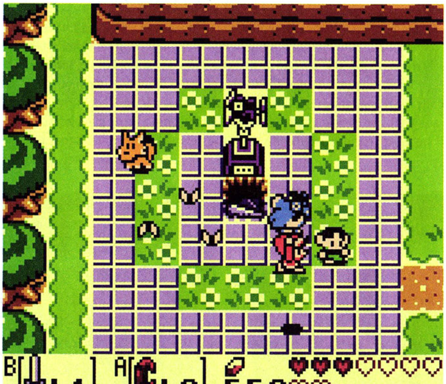
Shortly after Link and Marin's seaside rendezvous, Marin spends some time accompanying our hero on his quest. Far from a silent sidekick, she takes every opportunity to comment on Link's actions. She'll get giddy when the lad uses his shovel ("Dig it! Dig to the center of the earth!!"), but scold him for smashing pots in people's houses. She gets very upset if Link attacks an innocent Cucco...most of the time. Occasionally, Marin will change her tune and goad you on as you swing your sword at the poor poultry.



Do it! Do it mooooore! ...

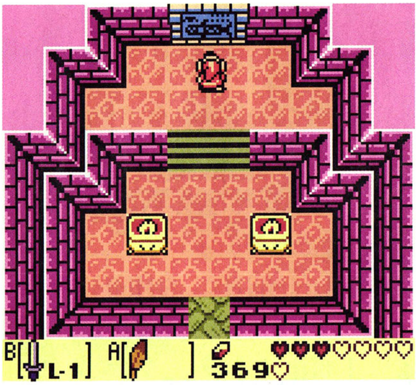
Take to the Skies

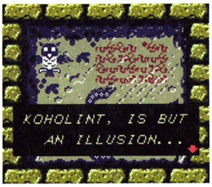
Speaking of Cuccos, it's probably in Link's best interest to not harm the little critters. After all, he'll need help from one later in the game. Once he resurrects a special Cucco known as the Flying Rooster, Link will be able to float around Koholint by lifting the fowl over his head. By learning the Frog's Song of Soul from Mamu, Link can enter the Flying Rooster's final resting place under the weather vane in Mabe Village. Playing this new song on Link's ocarina will bring the rooster back to life.

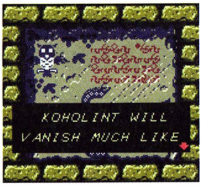


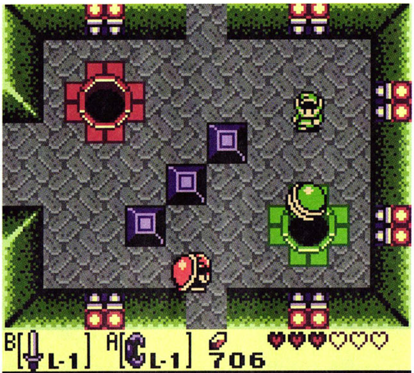
Koholint's Secret

Throughout Link's adventure, characters drop hints about a secret within Koholint Island. The clues all fall into place when Link ventures into the Southern Face Shrine. There he finds a stone etching that reveals the truth—Koholint Island doesn't exist. Indeed, the entire land is part of the Wind Fish's dream. Link's quest to awaken the legendary beast will cause all that he has seen—and everyone that he has met—to disappear forever. Unfortunately, it is the only way for Link to leave Koholint and return to his real life.




KOHOLINT, IS BUT AN ILLUSION...


KOHOLINT WILL VANISH MUCH LIKE

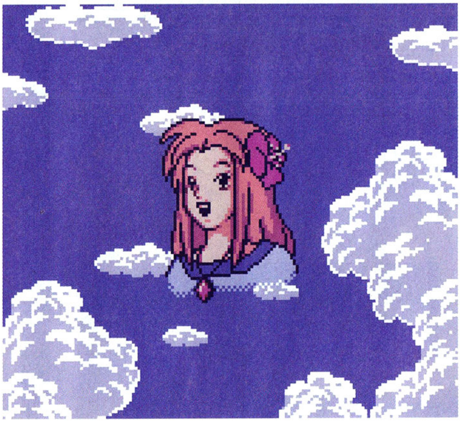


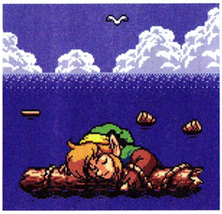
The Color Dungeon

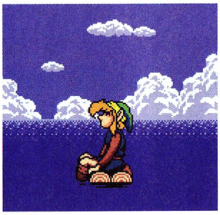
One of the new additions to the DX version of Link's Awakening is the Color Dungeon, which can be accessed by pushing tombstones in Koholint's cemetery in the proper sequence. Inside the dungeon, Link must overcome multiple color-based puzzles, and his reward is to choose one of two new tunics on offer—one increases his defensive capabilities, and the other boosts his offense.

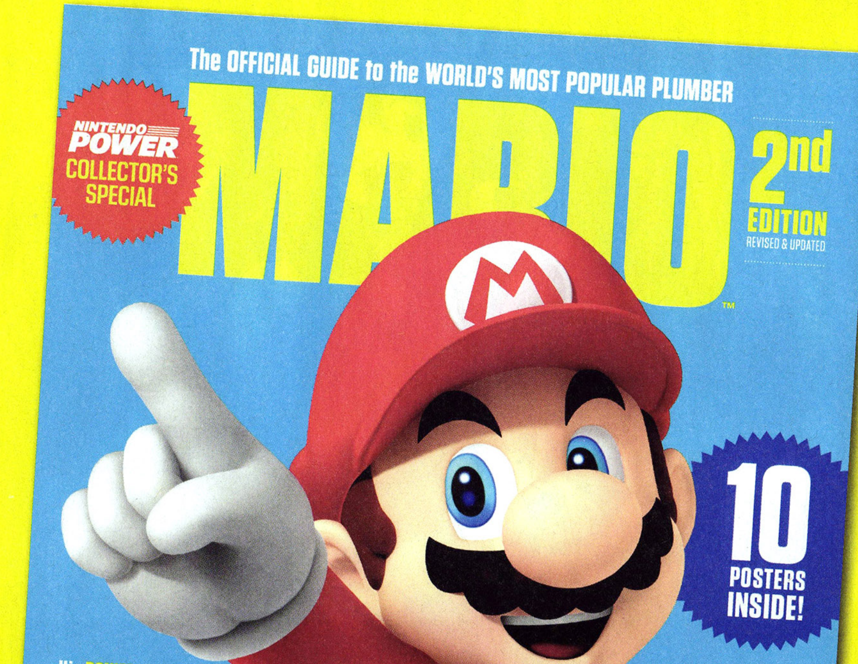
The Bittersweet Ending

Knowing the truth about Koholint Island makes defeating the final boss a less-than-joyous occasion. Instead of celebrating his victory, Link meets the Wind Fish and plays the eight instruments of the Sirens to wake him up. We then see the citizens of Koholint going about their daily routine as they fade into nothingness. Link awakens, drifting in the sea amid the wreckage of his boat. Climbing onto a stray piece of wood, he looks to the sky and reflects on the new world and new friends that he will never see again.





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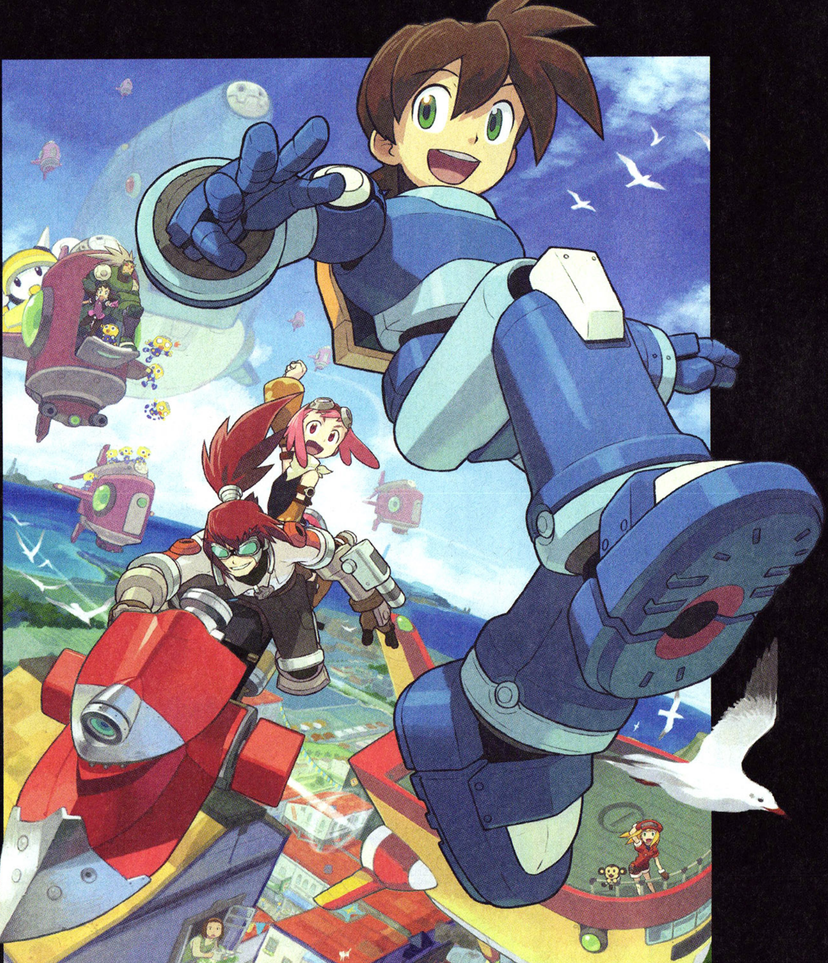


BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

With the input of thousands of gamers around the globe, Mega Man Legends 3 is at long last almost a reality.

BY **CHRIS HOFFMAN**

PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM** DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM** RELEASE: **TBD** **N3DS**

It's been a long time coming, but Mega Man Volnutt—the hero of Mega Man 64 and the Mega Man Legends series—is almost ready to make his triumphant return. The last time we saw the blue-clad hero in an action-adventure game was in Mega Man Legends 2 (released in October 2000 for the original PlayStation), in which he overcame great adversity only to find himself trapped on the world of Elysium.

Meanwhile, on Earth (otherwise known as Terra), ancient machines were threatening to reactivate and wreak havoc on an unsuspecting populace, and Mega Man's allies—his female companion Roll and his rival/romantic interest Tron Bonne—were building a rocket ship to bring Mega Man back. Players were warned that he "might be stuck up there a little while more," but it was hard to imagine that "a little while more" meant more than a decade.

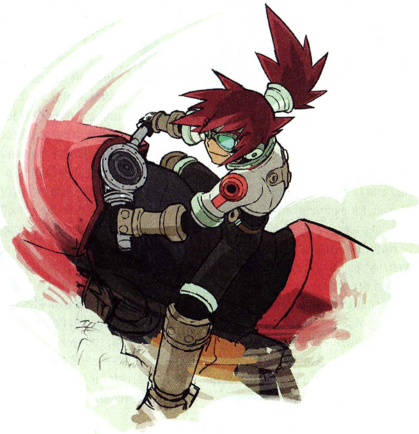
Fast-forward to September 2010, when Capcom announced that Mega Man Legends 3 was in development for the Nintendo 3DS handheld. But this wasn't just going to be any old sequel—it was a sequel that was going to literally be by the fans, for the fans.

"We've entered an age where user-originated content has become prominent in all media and a big part of our lives, as we see exemplified with things like YouTube," states producer Tatsuya Kitabayashi. "With so much high-quality work being generated via these outlets, I feel that the line between pro and amateur is more blurred than ever before. This project began with the idea that we could harness some of these great ideas and talent coming out of the community and turn them into an interesting and fun game."

Through Capcom's online "Devroom," Mega Man enthusiasts would be able to actually contribute to the game's creation by proposing ideas, providing feedback, and more. It was an unprecedented idea that promised to provide new levels of interaction between game fans and game creators.

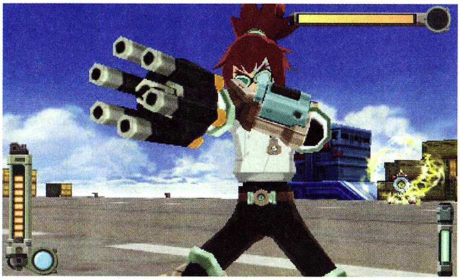
"Mega Man Legends is a franchise that possesses a dedicated installment of loving fans," Kitabayashi proclaims. "I feel that this series has the most passionate fan base out of all of Capcom's titles, which is what we needed for a project like this—where we are creating a game together with all of the fans—to be possible."

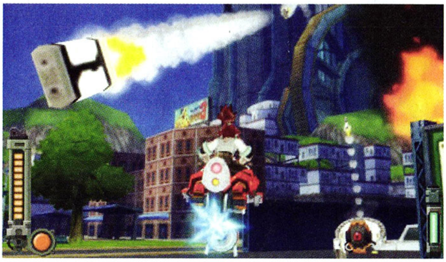
So far the collaboration has been quite fruitful; fans have been able to voice their opinions on the name and appearance of a major new female character, create new enemies, write dialogue, and more, plus be exposed to the intricacies of game development, such as character modeling and voice recording. Of course, what ultimately matters is how well the game plays—and from the looks of things, fans won't be disappointed.



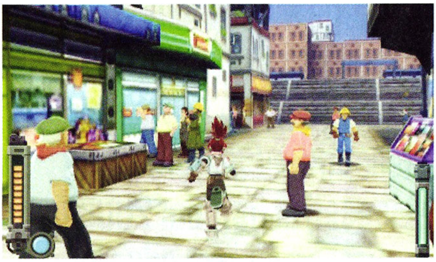
SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

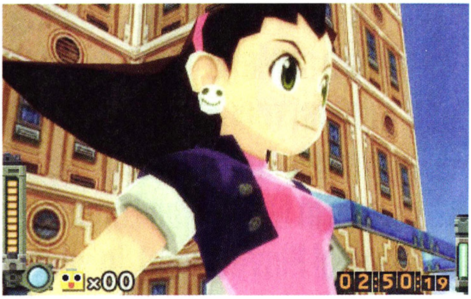
After spending some time with an early version of Mega Man Legends 3, we can safely say that development is on the right track. The series hasn't lost a step during its hiatus; veteran Mega Man Legends players will feel right at home as they run, jump, and shoot their way through

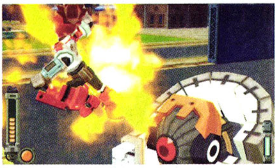




He isn't Mega Man, but new playable character Barrett packs plenty of firepower [above] and has mad hoverbike skills [right].





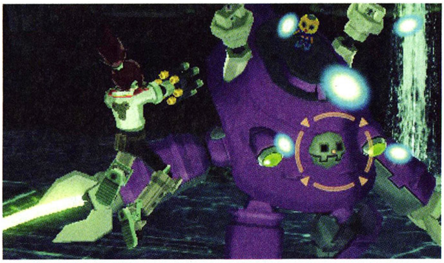


colorful cel-shaded environments. Though the default controls have been upgraded for modern times—you move the via the analog Circle Pad and fire your weapon with the R Button, for example—the game still feels like vintage Mega Man Legends.

Naturally, a lot has changed, as well. In the portion of the game we played, Mega Man wasn't even the main character; filling the role of protagonist was a white-jacketed, red-haired, hoverbike-riding youth named Barrett. This deputy leader of the Bright Bats gang might not be Mega Man, but he's got all of Mega Man's tricks and then some. Barrett can acquire special weapons (such as the Volcanic Leggings, which give him a flaming kick, and the Burst Spreader, which fires off five powerful shots), plus you can make him unleash melee attacks (by pressing the A Button) and execute a superfast dash move (by pressing Y) that lets him run straight up walls. Additionally, the inclusion of Barrett as the hero helps introduce newcomers to the series through a pair of fresh eyes.

If you're yearning to play as Mega Man, though, don't worry. "Mega Man is still stranded on Elysium and hasn't yet returned home," notes Kitabayashi, "but we do, of course, intend to make him playable along with Barrett for the main game."

In the meantime, Barrett has his work cut out for him. Thanks to the game's spacious setting—Teomo City on Klicklan Island—and Barrett's ability to ride around on his hoverbike, Mega Man Legends 3 feels more open than its predecessors. And there's plenty to do, too. At one point you may find yourself running through the city, defending citizens from missile-firing Reaverbots,

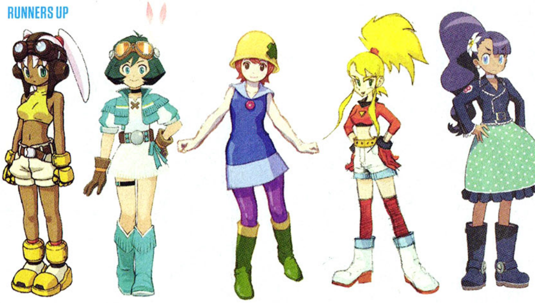


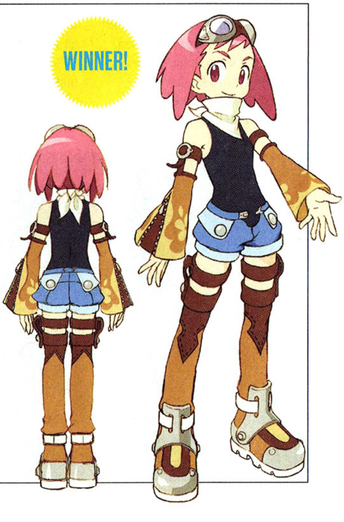
The Bonne mech shown here was designed by a fan, then adapted into a boss by the Capcom staff. This whip-wielding foe is no pushover!

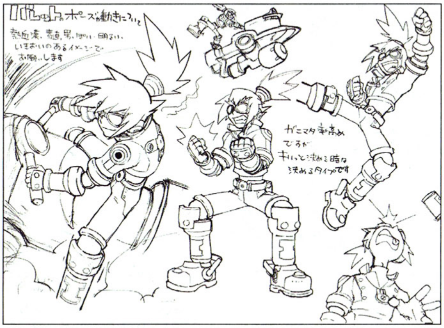
LEGEND IN THE MAKING: AERO

One of the first Devroom activities was a vote to determine the look for Aero, a new female character and a companion of Barrett's. Nine designs from various creators were proposed, and the one with the most votes was implemented in the game. At one point Aero's name was even up for debate. Originally intended to be named Sephira in North America, the character was renamed Aero (which was always her planned Japanese name) due to fan response.

RUNNERS UP





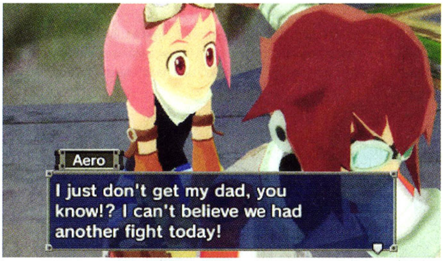

バレットのポーズや動きについて
熱血漢、素直、男っぽい、明るい、いきおいのあるイメージでお願いします
ガニマタ率高めであるがキメッと決める時は決めるタイプです

Loads of concept drawings were created to bring Barrett to life.

while at another you could be racing through the streets against the other members of the Bright Bats gang. Other missions include a boss battle against a rival gang leader named Bullbreath, a timed fetch quest to retrieve Tron Bonne's adorable Servbots, and an assignment in which you escort Aero (a female member of the Bright Bats) to various locales around the island.

One of the coolest encounters we experienced was a battle against the local law enforcement. Fed up with the Bright Bats and other hoverbike riders flouting authority, the chief of police (who also happens to be Aero's dad) enlists Roll to build a wheeled mech called the Anti-Rider Crusader (or ARC1), to take down Barrett and his friends. As you might expect, the heroes aren't just going to surrender, and the conflict that ensues is an action-packed on-rails shooting sequence in which you must blow out the ARC1's tires, shoot mines out of the sky, destroy cars that the ARC1 throws at you, and blast the ARC1 directly in its cannon as it attempts to release a devastating attack.

As Mega Man Legends fans know, though, a good portion of the adventuring usually takes place underground, and that remains the

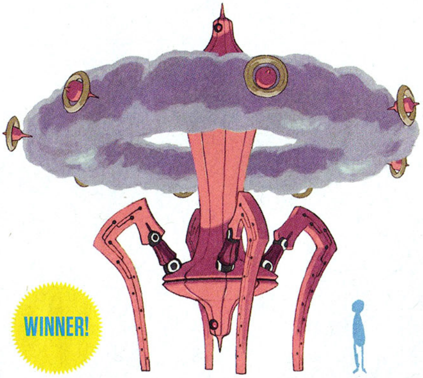


Aero

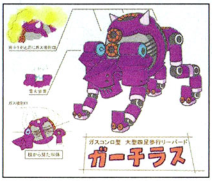
I just don't get my dad, you know!? I can't believe we had another fight today!

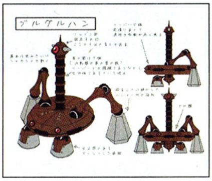
LEGEND IN THE MAKING: REAVERBOTS

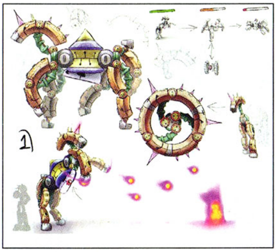
You can't have a Mega Man Legends game without vicious, creepy-looking Reaverbot enemies. Although the game will feature familiar returning Reaverbots, the Devroom tapped the fans to submit their own ideas. The winning entry, a rather large lightning-emitting Reaverbot by the name of Calamity, was chosen from about 400 entries. Many of the runners-up are impressive as well.

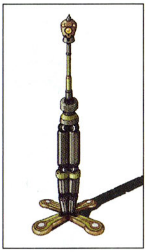


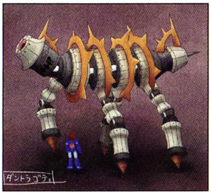
RUNNERS UP

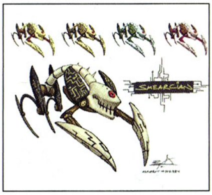

ガスコンロ型 大型四足歩行リーバード
ガーチラス
横から見た形体





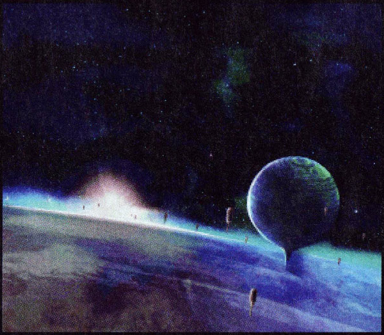






THE PROTOTYPE VERSION

If you're itching to play Mega Man Legends 3, you'll soon be able to scratch that itch. Though the full game doesn't have a release date, Mega Man Legends 3: Prototype Version (which features most of the content discussed in this article) will be one of the first offerings on the Nintendo eShop. According to producer Tatsuya Kitabayashi, "The Prototype Version is not a demo. It features quite a few original missions as well as a lot of content that won't be in the main game, and I can guarantee that its value well exceeds its price. You can download this game for approximately the price of one smartphone app, so I hope that even those with concerns download it and give it a try."



case this time out. You'll have numerous opportunities to venture into mysterious ruins beneath the island's surface, where you'll battle armies of Reaverbots and have the chance to find valuable refractors (which Roll desperately needs to complete the rocket and rescue Mega Man). Within the ruins you'll also square off against the Bonne family's amphibious mech. Armed with a whip, powerful projectiles, and electrical attacks (which can be especially dangerous when you're ankle-deep in water), this mech is one of the elements specifically designed by the fans. Additionally, while exploring underground you'll learn about a powerful artifact called the Klicke Lafonica—also known as the fire of all creation—which appears to be central to the game's plot. You can bet that Mega Man, the Bonnes, and Barrett are going to butt heads when an object of ultimate strength is involved.

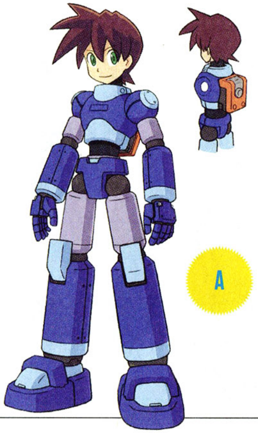
CALLING ALL CREATORS

Though we're enjoying Mega Man Legends 3 so far, the game's development still has a long way to go—Capcom's representatives say it's about 25 percent complete—and there are many mysteries left to solve. How long will it take for Mega Man to get back home? And is it just a coincidence that Barrett's name is a contraction of Barrell Caskett (Roll's grandfather) and that both characters have metal plates covering the left halves of their faces? (Come to think of it, Roll does mention that her grandfather has been missing for a while....) Those questions will be answered in the months to come.

The most exciting part, however, is that many of the decisions will be determined by fans like you. If you want to test the waters of game design and have a hand in creating one of the Nintendo 3DS system's most anticipated games, visit www.capcom-unity.com/devroom to find out how to join in on the fun.

LEGEND IN THE MAKING: MEGA MAN'S DESIGN

Even Mega Man Volnutt's appearance is open to Devroom debate. The three design options don't offer radical changes to the character (in fact, version A is how Mega Man looked in Mega Man Legends 2), but they each present something different. As of press time, a final design decision hadn't been reached.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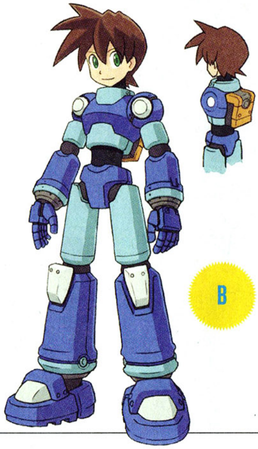
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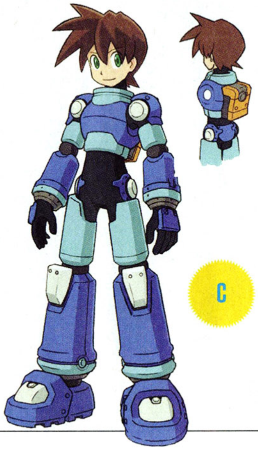
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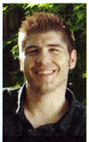
TALES FROM THE DEVROOM

Without a doubt, one of the most compelling aspects of Mega Man Legends 3 is the unprecedented amount of input that fans can have on the game through Capcom's online Devroom. The forum allows for collaborative game development on a scale that's never been previously attempted, but the rewards could be great for professional game makers and Mega Man fans alike. To learn more about the Devroom's inner workings, we spoke to Mega Man Legends 3 producer Tatsuya Kitabayashi, Capcom community manager Joveth Gonzalez, and Devroom community liaison Greg Moore.

TATSUYA KITABAYASHI



JOVETH GONZALEZ

GREG MOORE

NINTENDO POWER Are you happy with the response the fans have given to the Devroom opportunities so far?

JOVETH GONZALEZ It has been an incredible experience to watch this community get excited about each opportunity that we have given them to be creatively involved in the game. The fact that each event creates ongoing, meaningful dialogues between fans and the developers is a testament to the success of the goals of this project. This is truly a unique experience in gaming and I could not be happier with what we've set out to do.

How concerned is management about showing an unfinished game to the public so early in development?

TATSUYA KITABAYASHI Showing people the game in its unfinished state is the fundamental stance of this project, so we aren't really concerned about it. On the contrary, by having fans take part in the project this early in its production, we're aiming to draw a clear distinction from past projects where basic designs have been recruited from users to make them feel like they had some involvement in games that were already nearly complete.

I will say, however, that we were quite nervous for a while surrounding our initial announcement of this project at September's New York Comic Con last year, as we didn't even have any screenshots to show people. We really didn't have anything prepared yet when we made that announcement. [Laughs]

JG From our perspective, early on we weren't quite sure how transparent the team wanted to be so we approached everything from a very cautious standpoint: Will PR be OK with this? Is marketing going to be mad with this reveal? Finally, as the project evolved and we saw the earnestness in the development team and how important this transparency was to the basic tenet of the project, we were able to put away our concerns and just allow the team to have this ongoing, completely open discussion with the fans.

What's surprised you the most about fan suggestions/interactions in the Devroom so far?

JG For me, it's been a pleasant surprise to see how personally invested these Devroom members have become. Allowing them to constantly engage in conversations with our development team and to be able to sit in and participate in the decision-making process has led to this deep connection to the title. This has led to various grassroots, community-driven campaigns to help ensure that Mega Man Legends 3: Prototype Version is a success. The organic nature of this support is beyond humbling to experience, and I only hope that it continues to grow.

What kind of unexpected difficulties have there been?

JG As with anything of this scope, the amount of daily coordination between our North American office and our Japanese offices is intense. We have weekly Devroom-specific video conference calls with Japan in which we all sit down and hammer out the next week's schedule and more. Early on, before we were lucky enough to have Greg onboard, it was just me on the community side of MML3 and I was overwhelmed with the amount of information that was coming out of Japan. Late nights became the norm for me. Thankfully, we got Greg onboard and now he's able to manage the flow of information by using his amazing translation skills.

Roll's Rocket R&D Lab

Um, it's nothing... Well, actually... my wrench broke, and without it, I can't continue working on my rocket...

Has there been much of a difference in responses between fans from Japan and fans from the West?

GREG MOORE I'd say Legends fans are fairly in tune with one another when it comes to what they love about this franchise and what they want from it, and the results of the polls we've held in both Devrooms have suggested as much. The American Devroom does seem more geared towards facilitating lots of open discussion with its mighty forum section, though Japan is certainly not lacking for participation in our monthly Devroom events.

What percentage of the game would you say is being determined by fans as opposed to being decided upon by the Capcom staff?

TK I can't really give a concrete number here. This is a very fluid process that hasn't been fully set in stone yet. If fans feel that fan-made content is sparse, we'll add more. That's the kind of feedback we want you to post in the Devroom!

Is there any aspect that you would say is off limits to being determined by the fans?

TK When all is said and done, nobody really wants to play through a game where they already know everything that happens in the plot, so I don't think we'll be having the fans decide on the game's story.

What other aspects of the game will fans be creating or voting on in the coming months?

GM Without going into too much detail and getting myself into a lot of trouble, I can tell you that we're likely to see many more chances to contribute in ways both big and small, including the chance to design some things you might have always wanted to for a Mega Man game. We're also likely to see some reprises of the more-popular events we've done thus far.

Finally, why should gamers join in and participate in the Mega Man Legends 3 Devroom?

GM Gamers should take part in the Devroom because it shows and explains a lot of aspects of game creation that they may have always wondered about. Also, because the Devroom exemplifies a new type of community-centric game development, where gamers have an unprecedented amount of input into how this game turns out.

JG This is something incredibly special that has never been done before for console games. The ability to influence aspects of a game on a regular basis and to feel as invested as the game developers themselves is something that is rarely experienced. Gamers should definitely take the time to check out the Devroom and what we have to offer so that when they eventually get to play the game, they can say, "Yeah, I helped make that" and maybe even see themselves in the game credits. This is truly a game by the fans and for the fans.

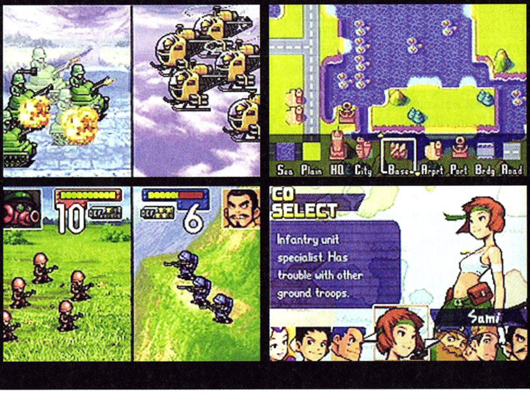
TK In the Devroom, we're showing people what goes on behind the scenes of game development, and I think it has a lot of interesting, helpful content for anyone who's ever wondered how games are created or who hopes to make games in the future. So I hope those people come check it out!

Nintendo
POWER
GAME BOY
Nintendo
START
SELECT
B
A
GAME BOY ADVANCE

10

Advance Wars

Advance Wars played on one of the great military maneuvers: the Trojan Horse. Inside the cute cover art and the colorful graphics was a belly full of double-tough strategy gameplay. But the charming exterior wasn't a ruse—Intelligent Systems tuned its first Game Boy Advance title to give casual players a smooth introduction to a challenging genre. That took more effort than building another hardcores-only sim, but it made the Advance Wars series a hit in America, and strategy games in general a mainstay of the GBA lineup. That bouncing cartoon tank blazed a trail for Fire Emblem and a fistful of other classics.


Sea
Plain
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Brdg
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6

CO SELECT

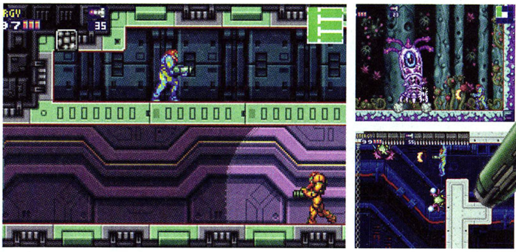
Infantry unit specialist. Has trouble with other ground troops.

Sami

a DECADE ADVANCED

It's been 10 years since the Game Boy Advance stormed onto the scene. We celebrate with a look back at the system's 10 best games and a whole lot more.

Ten years ago, handheld gaming was a little bit different. There were no touch screens, no gyroscopic controls, no wireless communications, and certainly no glasses-free 3D visuals. But when Nintendo released the Game Boy Advance in 2001, it nonetheless ushered in a fantastic new era of handheld gaming. Sure, the original Game Boy and the Game Boy Color had dominated the 1990s, but by the 21st century those systems were showing their age. The Game Boy Advance (GBA) brought handheld gaming to a higher level with a 32-bit processor, better resolution, more colors, new graphical tricks, vastly improved sound capabilities, and more. With those improvements came handheld games that looked and played better than anything users had experienced before, and gamers flocked to the machine in droves; more than 81 million systems were sold worldwide over the hardware's life cycle. Though the Game Boy Advance has been retired—the last GBA title was released in 2008—the system is home to one of the greatest handheld lineups ever assembled. To celebrate the 10 years since the system's North American launch, we take a look back at the top 10 games and other highlights of Nintendo's portable powerhouse.



9

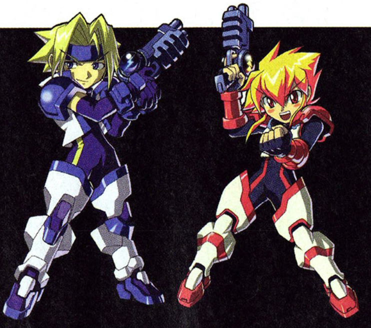
Metroid Fusion

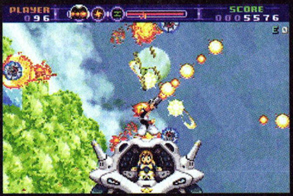
Metroid Fusion wasn't just another Metroid game—it was the first 2D Metroid title in eight years, and that fact alone was enough to put smiles on the faces of hundreds of thousands of gamers. But this game didn't just rely on nostalgia to get by. It evolved the series in numerous ways, including a startling new look for Samus and a more fleshed-out storyline. The biggest addition, however, was arguably the tension caused by the SA-X, Samus's evil (and more powerful) duplicate. Battling the SA-X usually meant certain doom; in most instances, your only option was to ignore your fighting instinct and flee if you wanted to survive.

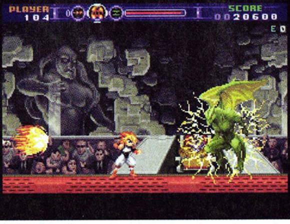
8

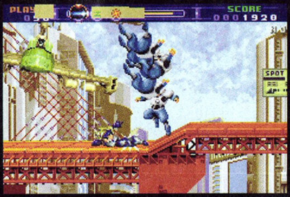
Gunstar Super Heroes

Just as the original Gunstar Heroes pushed the Sega Genesis hardware to its limits in 1993, you could almost see smoke coming out of the GBA as it tried to keep up with the crazy, balls-to-the-wall action of this long-awaited follow-up. It was a dream come true for die-hard Sega fans. But did you know that developer Treasure originally intended to play off that legacy by packing Gunstar Super Heroes with all sorts of classic Sega references? Though the final product did include some musical cues from Sega oldies, as well as a vertically scrolling stage reminiscent of Super Thunder Blade, NP saw early versions of the game that also featured homages to Golden Axe, Altered Beast, and more. Only Treasure and Sega know why they were removed, but Gunstar Super Heroes still kicked ass.





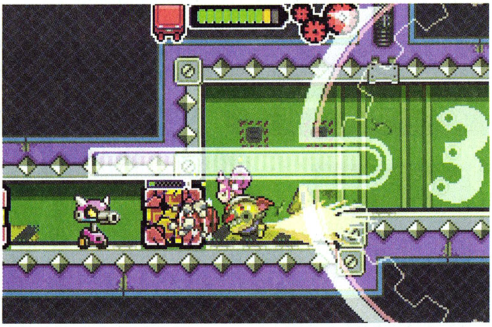


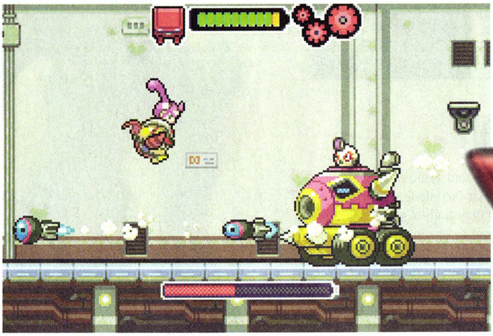


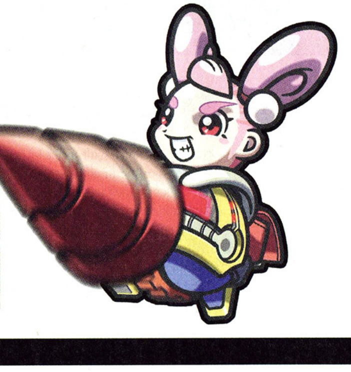
7

Drill Dozer

There are few things as satisfying as the feeling that you are in control of a high-tech piece of machinery. Be it a tank, a jet, or a spaceship, the sense of power that one gets from piloting these devices makes them a video game favorite. Who would have thought that one of the most satisfying "instrument of destruction" games would be an innocent-looking cartoon platformer from Nintendo? The game's mechanic of upgrading the titular mech suit and switching gears as you attack for more sustained damage does a surprisingly good job of making you feel like you're really in control of the vehicle. The cartridge's rumble feature (a rarity for GBA games) enhances the experience.



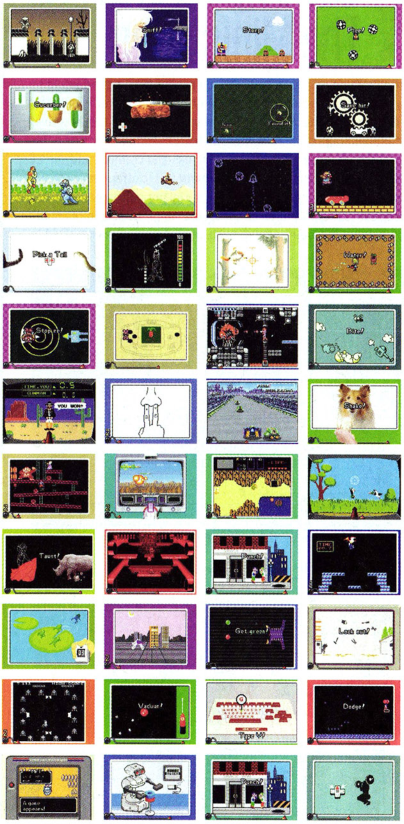




6

WarioWare, Inc.: Mega Microgame$!

Stomping Goombas, catching toast, parking cars, chopping trees, hitting baseballs, watering plants, balancing blocks, reflecting lasers, sinking putts, lifting weights, cutting hair, hunting ducks, picking noses, slicing steaks, extinguishing fires, igniting fireworks, sniffling snot, capturing aliens, jumping hot dog-shaped vehicles, swatting flies, building automobiles, battling Bowser, popping wheelies, marching as a penguin, avoiding arrows, shooting Mother Brain, shaking dog paws, taunting rhinos, counting frogs, eating fruit—these are a few examples of the more than 200 five-second-long, Control Pad-and/or A Button-controlled activities on offer in WarioWare, Inc.: Mega Microgame$!.



ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

From hardware redesigns to peculiar peripherals, the Game Boy Advance offered plenty of reasons for technology enthusiasts to stand up and pay attention.

Game Boy Advance SP

The original GBA delivered plenty of gaming goodness, but we admit it had some issues. For one thing, the screen wasn't backlit. For another, it was purple. The GBA SP, released in 2003, fixed those problems, plus it provided a sleek, compact clamshell design and eliminated the need for alkaline batteries. The system came in several variations, but the NES-themed version is our favorite.

Game Boy Micro

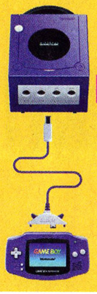
Released in 2005, this extrasmall version of the GBA is one of the most compact handheld gaming devices ever. Unfortunately, the smaller system didn't come with a smaller price tag, and the tiny screen made many games hard to play.

e-Reader

The e-Reader accessory sounded promising. Plug the device into the GBA, use it to scan special cards, and—voilá!—you gain new in-game content or even entire classic games. In practice, however, swiping a set of cards through a device to play Excitebike or Urban Champion is far more trouble than it's worth.

Game Boy Player

An attachment for the GameCube, the Game Boy Player allowed you to play GBA (as well as Game Boy and Game Boy Color) games on your television in full-screen glory. Some companies even released specialized Game Boy Player controllers in Japan.



Nintendo GameCube Game Boy Advance Cable

This cable was intended to usher in an age of connectivity between the Game Boy Advance and the GameCube. Although it didn't set the world on fire, it did yield some excellent games, such as Pac-Man Vs. and The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures.

PORT AUTHORITY

Though our celebration of the GBA is focused primarily on original and exclusive games, those titles were only half of the reason to own the system. The GBA was also host to portable versions of all-time classics that originated on systems such as the Super NES. Here are our top-ten faves.

1

The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past/Four Swords

2

Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2

3

Banon: So, this is the girl... The one to whom the esper responded.

Final Fantasy VI Advance

4

Super Mario Advance 4: Super Mario Bros. 3

5

Final Fantasy IV Advance

6

Final Fight One

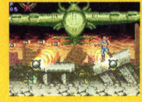
7

Super Mario Advance

8

Yoshi's Island: Super Mario Advance 3

9



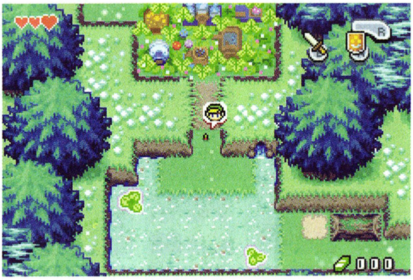
Contra Advance: The Alien Wars EX

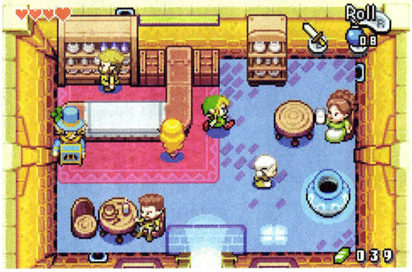
10

Disney's Magical Quest Starring Mickey & Minnie

5 The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap

Given the Zelda titles' heavy emphasis on exploration, a good world to journey through is crucial to the overall adventure. As it turns out, The Minish Cap contains one of the best overworlds in the entire Zelda series. Taking full advantage of Link's newfound ability to shrink down to the size of an insect, each screen is chock-full of nooks and crannies and secret passages. In order to discover all that the game has to offer, Link will have to do ample size-shifting. Thanks to the shrinking mechanic, even the same area can look wildly different. What is a simple puddle to "normal" Link, for instance, becomes a treacherous river once he's pocket-sized.





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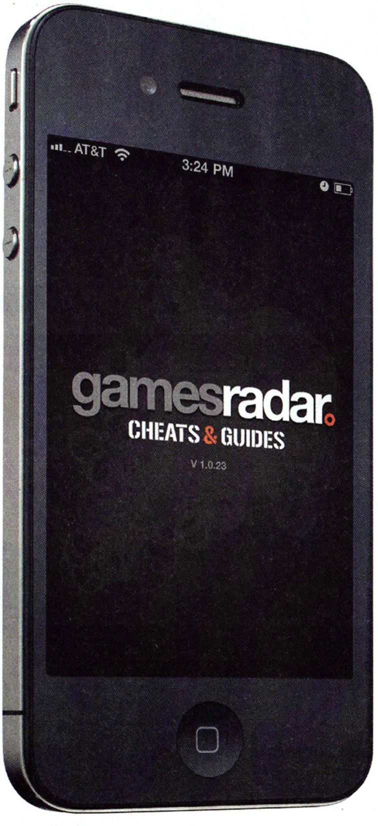

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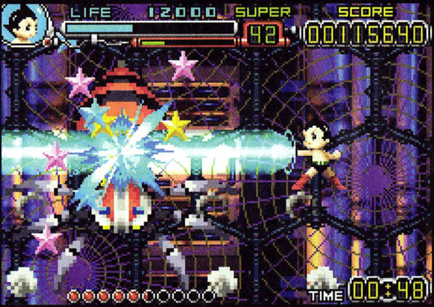
4 Astro Boy: Omega Factor

Talk about a downer of an ending. After fighting your way to the end of Astro Boy: Omega Factor (based on the beloved manga/anime series by Osamu Tezuka), our robot hero is confronted by Death Mask, the Goddess of Justice. She reveals that as punishment for the conflicts that they have caused, she intends to destroy all of the robots on Earth. Without even the courtesy of a boss fight, the game cuts to the closing credits scrolling over a shot of our burning planet. Yikes! Luckily, post-credits, Astro is revived by Phoenix (a character from another Tezuka manga), who gives him the chance to start the game over and alter his past. By replaying all the previous stages, you can meet new characters, solve new puzzles, and access new levels. It may seem like a gimmick to lengthen the gameplay, but when the action is as fun as this, we're happy to play it again.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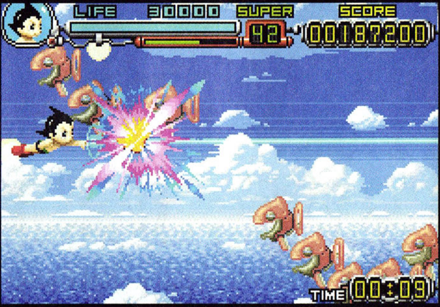
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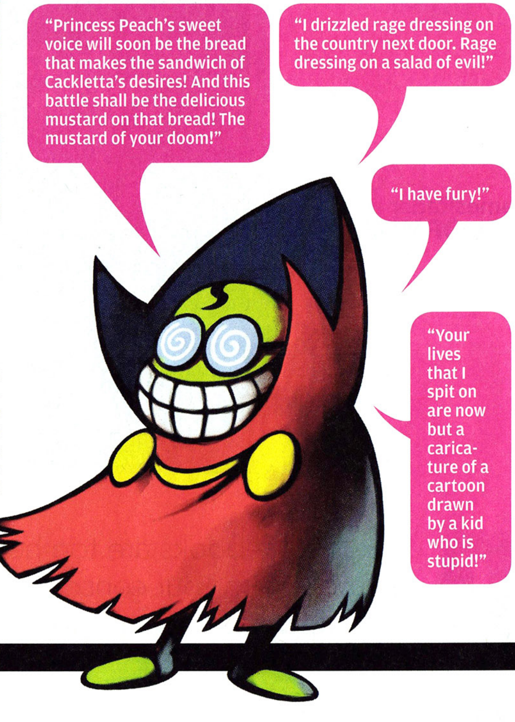
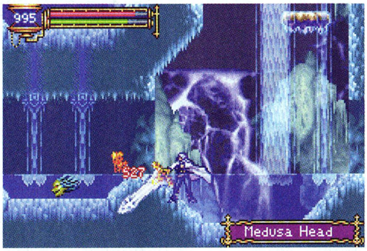
3

Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga

If you ask anyone involved in writing, they'll tell you that the hardest thing to pull off is humor. That obviously carries over to video games—we could probably count on our fingers how many games have actually made us laugh. Atop that list is Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga. This RPG also boasts a terrific battle system, but it's the humor that steals the show and makes it one of the most memorable GBA titles. A masterfully localized script calls out the absurdity of the Mario universe, deftly mocking it and celebrating it at the same time. Most importantly, Superstar Saga introduced us to the mad linguistic genius of villain Fawful.

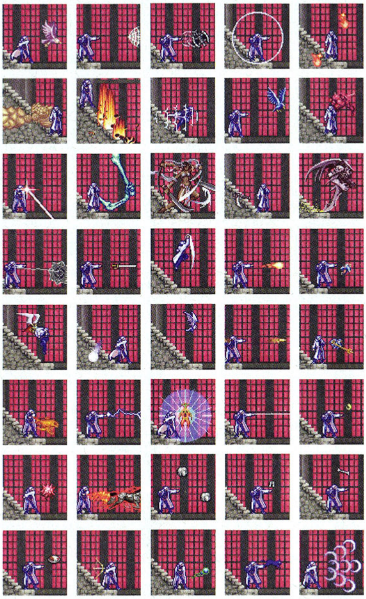

"Princess Peach's sweet voice will soon be the bread that makes the sandwich of Cackletta's desires! And this battle shall be the delicious mustard on that bread! The mustard of your doom!"
"I drizzled rage dressing on the country next door. Rage dressing on a salad of evil!"
"I have fury!"
"Your lives that I spit on are now but a caricature of a cartoon drawn by a kid who is stupid!"



2

Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow

We always expect great visuals, compelling exploration, and Gothic horror from our handheld Castlevania games, but an addictive new collection aspect made Aria of Sorrow one of the best. The enemies would randomly give up their souls when you slew them, and catching 'em all could easily become an obsession. Sometimes you had to kill an enemy hundreds of times before you lucked out and obtained its soul, but it sure was satisfying when it finally happened, since each soul granted hero Soma Cruz a new stat boost or skill, ranging from throwing curry to transforming into a giant demon.



THE BIZARRE, THE OBSCURE, AND THE UGLY

The vast GBA library is filled with all sorts of memorable titles. Among the Marios, Zeldas, and Metroids, however, are plenty of overlooked, underappreciated, or just plain weird games that we still remember despite their lack of a big name.

It's Mr. Pants

In the UK, where It's Mr. Pants was developed, "pants" refers to what Americans call underwear, which means It's Mr. Pants is a puzzle game starring a crudely drawn man who wears only a bowler hat and a pair of tighty-whiteys (although his are usually red). This game received very limited distribution in the US.

Ninja Five-O

For a game that was released in 2003, Ninja Five-O sure feels like a remnant of the late '80s. In this case, that's a good thing. The totally radical plot places you in control of a ninja cop who must take down terrorists and rescue hostages. In addition to the standard swordplay, there's a grappling hook that allows you to pull off all sorts of acrobatic attacks.

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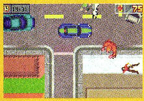
JUDGE

The Pinball of the Dead

This amusingly titled game takes the zombie-blasting action from Sega's The House of the Dead 2 and moves it to where it truly belongs—the pinball table. With three different tables to choose from, legions of monsters to splatter, and the return of some familiar boss characters, this is an original twist on a classic game.

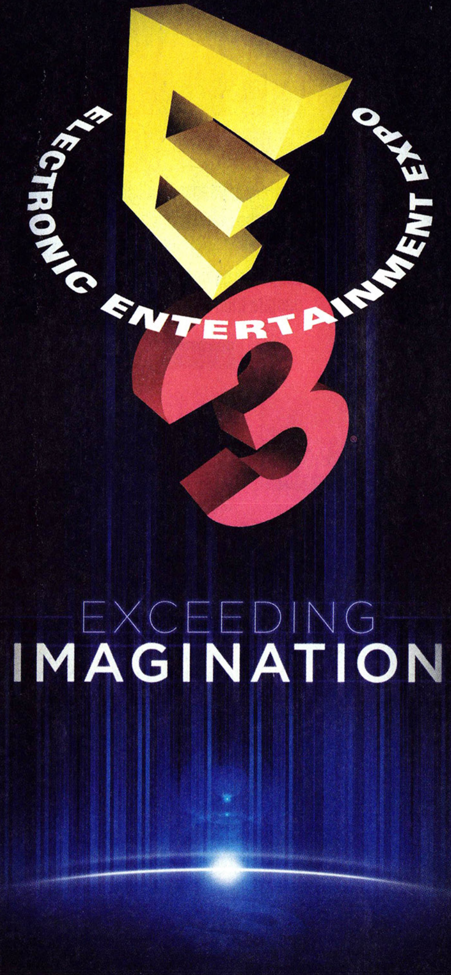
Santa Claus Saves the Earth

We never would have guessed that Santa Claus's natural enemies are fairies, but this game reveals the truth. On Christmas Eve, the present-hating fairy Nilam banishes Santa to a magical realm. In order to make his scheduled holiday deliveries, Santa must fight his way through a gauntlet of obstacles, traps, animals, and, um, cavemen.



Urban Yeti!

This is probably the strangest game to appear on the GBA. The proud Urban Yeti desires a mate, but even yetis need cash to impress the ladies. This leads our big-footed hero to accept a series of odd jobs, each styled after a classic arcade title. It's not terribly good, but it's so darn weird that you can't help but be impressed.



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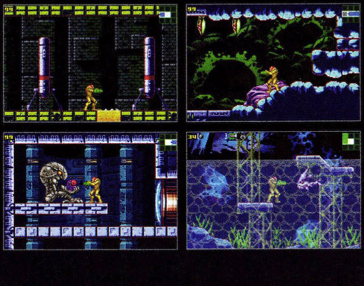
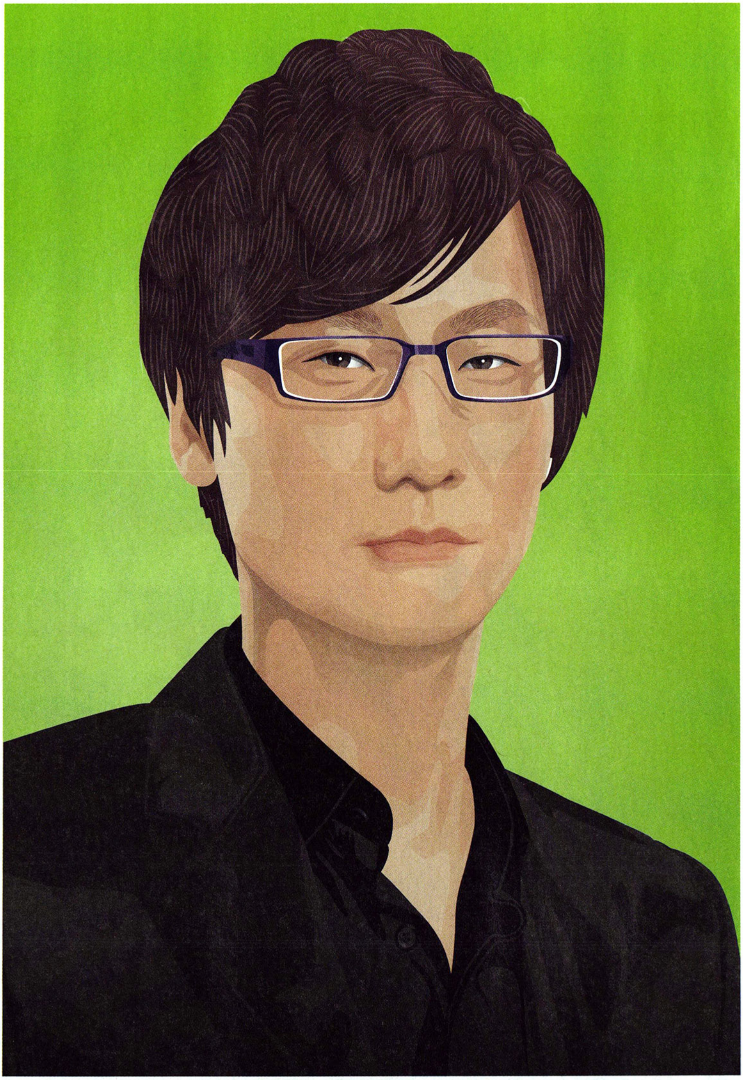
1

Metroid: Zero Mission

Most longtime Metroid maniacs cite Super Metroid or Metroid Prime as the series's best, but we'd like to make the case for Metroid: Zero Mission. With snappy 2D gameplay that has been tuned to perfection, significant enhancements over its 8- and 16-bit predecessors, and one of the all-time best postgame surprises, Zero Mission is the most polished iteration of the classic Metroid experience. Of course, whether you prefer a side-scrolling adventure over a first-person one is a matter of personal preference, but Metroid: Zero Mission deserves at least a mention during any debate over the franchise's top title.



Power Profiles



DATE OF BIRTH
August 24, 1963

BIRTHPLACE
Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo, Japan

POSITION
Vice President, Corporate Officer of Konami Digital Entertainment, Co. Ltd.; Director of Kojima Productions

BEST KNOWN FOR
Creating Metal Gear, his stealthy ninjalike tendencies

FAVORITE FOOD
Sushi, pasta

CURRENT PROJECTS
Metal Gear Solid: Snake Eater 3D

Hideo Kojima

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTINA EMPEDOCLES

There are a number of great game developers, but only a few game-creating icons. Konami's Hideo Kojima is one of those icons. Through his revolutionary Metal Gear series and other titles, Kojima has stretched the boundaries of interactive entertainment not only with innovative gameplay, but also with rich stories, believable worlds, and compelling characters that truly make players think and feel. Kojima's eye for detail and ability to continually push the envelope have resulted in million-seller after million-seller and earned him worldwide praise: *Newsweek* magazine named him one of the top 10 people to watch in 2002, and he received a lifetime achievement award at the 2009 Game Developers Choice Awards. The honors are well-deserved; if it weren't for Kojima, gaming might not quite be what it is today.

NINTENDO POWER How did you first get into the video game business?

HIDEO KOJIMA I originally wanted to create films. However, living in the Kansai region of Japan, I was unable to find a way into the industry. Therefore, I resolved to do what I could independently for the time being, which was to write and release a novel.

It was during this period of growing pains as a student that I encountered games. Those were still the days of the Famicom [the Japanese version of the NES], the dawn of a new era. The hardware was 8-bit, used a limited color palette, and could only produce cheap beeping sounds, but I sensed great potential in this new form of media.

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be an astronaut, an animal preservationist, or a detective, in that order.

My generation witnessed the Apollo landing on the moon and the Apollo-Soyuz docking in real time.... Back in those days, being an astronaut required a level of courage and talent that made them truly deserving of being called pioneers and heroes. I'm still fascinated with them to this day.

When you first came up with the idea for Metal Gear, did you ever think that it would become as big as it has? Why do you think it's resonated with so many gamers?

I had no idea whatsoever. The only thing I was focusing on was creating the game that I wanted to develop. Above all else, I didn't expect Metal Gear to be widely accepted at the peak of the "shooting game" era, when the previous gaming generation taught us that games didn't need stories. What I think was well received by the players was the tension of stealth that had not yet been used in games, in addition to being able to enjoy a story while playing an action game.

> *"Above all else, I didn't expect Metal Gear to be widely accepted at the peak of the 'shooting game' era..."*

A lot of North American gamers love the NES version of Metal Gear, but you're not happy with it. Why is that? And did you have any involvement with the NES version beyond the concept on which it was based?

I had absolutely no participation in the development of the NES version. The NES version was a pitiful title developed cheaply and simply by a small team in Tokyo. That was during the bubble economy where anything and everything that was released would sell. I came across the game in a bargain bin and tried playing it, but the game design is pretty bad.

There is some new gameplay that includes infiltrating a base that didn't exist in the original. However, even I, the developer of the original game, was unable to infiltrate the base even once.

Furthermore, being "Metal Gear," it goes without saying that Metal Gear should make an appearance at the end. However, from what I've heard, due to the technical difficulties in displaying the sprite on the screen, they swapped Metal Gear out for a gigantic monitor. That made me see that those who created the game had no sliver of appreciation for the players. However, even though it was an abomination, it was during the bubble economy and it sold millions overseas. That title has only soiled my reputation.

I almost hate to ask, but what are your thoughts on Snake's Revenge for the NES?

I wasn't involved with Snake's Revenge for the NES either. However, this was created by the Kobe development team and wasn't what I would consider a "bad game."

Actually, one of my juniors was working on the NES Snake's Revenge and he said to me, "We're making a sequel to Metal Gear, but what I really want to play is a true sequel made by you, Kojima-san." It's because of that request that I ended up creating Metal Gear 2 on the MSX2. If Snake's Revenge for the NES had never existed then there would not have been an MG2 and there would never have been an MGS for the PS1.

The Metal Gear Solid games have always covered serious issues, but you sprinkle humorous elements in as well (Snake getting dizzy and losing his lunch, etc.). Why do you feel that this is important?

When growing up in Japan, I was exposed to Western culture through movies, books, music, etc. That contributed to forming my belief that a person's sense of humor is the most important facet of their charm.

GAMEOGRAPHY

Notably absent from this list is the NES version of Metal Gear. Although Kojima was responsible for the game's concept and story, he wasn't involved in the game's adaptation to the NES.

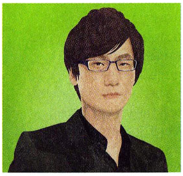
METAL GEAR
1987, MSX2
DIRECTOR, WRITER, GAME DESIGNER

METAL GEAR 2: SOLID SNAKE
1990, MSX2
DIRECTOR, WRITER

SNATCHER
1994, SEGA CD
WRITER, DIRECTOR

POLICENAUTS
1996, PLAYSTATION
WRITER, DIRECTOR

Power Profiles



MGS is a game in which you advance while you avoid being discovered and the player experiences continuous tension. However, being under constant strain for a prolonged period of time is tough on the nerves, and that's why you need to slacken the pressure from time to time. I believe that by strategically guiding how the player will experience emotions in the game, that will result in the player wanting to revisit that world many times over.

Additionally, creating a wave of emotion just prior to a tense moment helps to further elevate the tension felt in the following scene. This same technique can be seen in the frequent use of humor in Hitchcock's thrillers.

How do you balance creating game content and managing a studio? Which aspect of your job do you like more?
Without a doubt, I prefer creating game content. If I'm no longer able to make games, I'll leave this industry.

I am a game designer by trade, and it's only because I wanted the power to create freely that I also became a budget-managing producer. In turn, to continue growing as a producer, I have produced other projects besides my own, resulting in the management of an entire studio. However, I do not particularly want to be in management, and if I'm no longer able to be constantly involved as a game designer, it would lose all meaning.

I believe the same could be said of Spielberg, Guillermo Del Toro, and J.J. Abrams. It's precisely because they continue to make their own movies that they are able to lead production on other people's movies. They know the inner workings of production, so they understand what it really takes to make a hit movie and succeed in the business.

You seem to be drawn toward technologically powerful gaming hardware. How important do you think top hardware specs are for the success of the gaming industry?
Advancement in technology makes what is impossible today possible tomorrow.

Games are a form of entertainment that evolves daily in step with the progression of technology.

Note that unlike CG movies, I'm not just talking about improved graphics and sound. Instead, I am referring to exciting new experiences and ways of playing that become possible through the use of new technology.

What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of the video game medium as a storytelling device?
Truth be told, interactivity and storytelling are like oil and water. They usually don't mix.

I believe players have an urge to become another version of themselves and experience things that they can't experience in their real lives. That is what I believe to be the true attraction of games. However, in contrast with movies and novels, it is difficult to interactively experience a unique occupation or life that is not your own. For example, if you suddenly had to realistically assume the role of a doctor or a lawyer, there is no way you could do so without experience and knowledge specific to that field. That's still a problem we can't fully overcome without taking away a certain degree of freedom. That is where story comes in, because what I want is to create games where players can become another version of themselves, experience new things, and learn from the experience of playing the game. I believe the virtual experience that they encounter in the game world should enrich that player's life.

You've famously said that you don't think video games are art as a whole. Are there *any* video games that you do consider art?
So long as it is interactive, it is not art.

I believe that art is an expression of the creator's inner self, to the point of obstinacy. It is the complete embodiment of the creator's personality and his way of life. That is what makes it art. For example, I would consider a game that cannot be played to be art. I believe such an interpretation would be similar to the work of art by Taro Okamoto titled "The Chair that Refuses Sitting." That said, there are elements of art in game design.

What do you think about the recent proliferation of casual games?
Casual gamers have established a category of players that is different from the gamer category that's existed till now. In the near future, both hardcore gamers and casual gamers will all be connected via social media. However, at the moment, hardcore gamers and casual users cannot be considered to be a collective audience. The casual gamer who plays to kill time and the hardcore gamer who invests time and money in games exist together, but as separate markets. The two are not equal.

In the future, neither of the two groups will cease to exist and making such an assumption would be risky. For the time being, the two markets need to be addressed separately. That is why, even if everything were to focus on the casual gaming market, the core gaming market would not disappear.

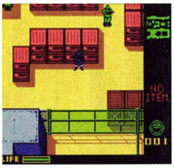
The Japanese gaming industry has taken somewhat of a back seat to Western-developed games in recent years. Why do you think that is?
Firstly, with the progression of hardware, advanced technology has become necessary for game development. However, regardless of existing in that reality, Japanese game creators continue to attempt to treat the game screen like a classical painting. They try to resolve game design purely with ideas and hand-crafted systems. Western game creators populate the screen with technology and make the impossible possible with technology.

Additionally, we are in an age where Japanese culture and national identity saturate every corner of our industry, resulting in games that lack a global perspective. A game featuring a slender youth clad in a high-school uniform on the streets of Shibuya will not sell overseas. The tastes of

GAMEOGRAPHY

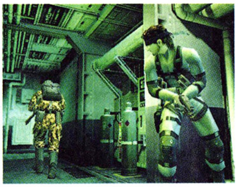
LIFE
ALERT
危険
99.99
2/2
RATION
25/25

METAL GEAR SOLID
1998, PLAYSTATION
DIRECTOR, WRITER, PRODUCER



METAL GEAR SOLID
2000, GAME BOY COLOR
PRODUCER

ZONE OF THE ENDERS
2001, PLAYSTATION 2
PRODUCER



METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY
2001, PLAYSTATION 2
DIRECTOR, WRITER, PRODUCER

Japanese game creators are deeply rooted in their domestic background.

Unfortunately, regardless of the availability of overseas movies, novels, and music, the Japanese youth of today have stopped absorbing foreign influences. There has also been a decline in studies abroad. At some point the balance shifted so that only Japanese movies, novels, music, and comics gain popularity among young people. I believe that this is the most undesirable situation that we could find ourselves in. If Japan is to compete globally, both technology and being in tune with the global tastes and preferences are key.

Looking back on the Boktai and Lunar Knights games, do you think you were able to accomplish what you wanted to with that series? Do you plan to revisit it?
Boktai was a game concept created around a setting where sunlight is used to defeat vampires, an idea that I had been fond of for many years. Ideally, I should have handled the game design, script, and the direction myself. However, at the time I also had my MGS project, so I had no choice but to leave Boktai in the hands of my team of younger developers. I took one step back and participated in the project as a producer.

I believe that the team pulled through and did a pretty good job. Boktai had good content and did well sales-wise as well. However, I do believe that the team lacked the necessary power and wisdom to introduce an entirely new and innovative title and have it successively penetrate the market. In retrospect, I do realize that it was a very challenging project to place in other peoples' hands. If there ever is an opportunity to take up this idea once again, I believe that I would have to personally take the reins for the project.

What do you think about the reliance on sequels in gaming?
Honestly, I think that franchises in gaming represent great opportunities for creators. It all depends on your outlook. Compared to one-shot original titles, the budget is usually much higher, and the exposure is much greater.

Truly creative individuals can find ways to take advantage of this by challenging themselves to implement as many original ideas as possible in each sequel.

As a cinematic example, James Cameron's take on *Aliens* demonstrates how melding new ideas with existing franchises can yield truly exciting and original results. It's only natural for corporations and consumers alike to be apprehensive when it comes to anything new. But, that shouldn't stop creators from leveraging franchises to produce original content.

You have a well-documented friendship with Mario creator Shigeru Miyamoto. How did you two become close?
The first time I met Mr. Miyamoto was when we both received awards at the Japan Media Arts Festival, sponsored by the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs. Of course, we had both read about each other in the media, but the first time we exchanged words was when Mr. Miyamoto came up to me and said, "Congratulations."

That was the start of our relationship. Of course, Mr. Miyamoto is like a god to me, so no matter how close we become, I don't think we could ever be normal "friends." That said, one rumor I would like to put to rest are reports that Mr. Miyamoto interviewed me and turned me down for a job at Nintendo. I did attend an informational session at Nintendo, but I got accepted to Konami before proceeding to the interview phase, so I didn't continue with Nintendo's application process.

How much input did you have on Snake's appearance in Super Smash Bros. Brawl?
I worked hand-in-hand with [director] Mr. [Masahiro] Sakurai, who I also consider a friend. At the time Nintendo thought that Snake felt like a Sony character, and didn't think he would fit into SSBB. However, I really wanted Snake in the game, and it was through Mr. Sakurai that we were able to reach a consensus and make it happen.

We love Gillian Seed from Snatcher. Would you like to see him back in action, and do you think it'll ever happen?
Even if Gillian is revived someday, I don't think I'd be the one to make that game. If there's someone else out there who could take the reins, I would love to support their efforts.

Speaking of Snatcher, in that game, it says your favorite game is Zabika. Can you explain what that is?
When I was a kid, I was often guilty of cutting class to hang out in arcades. Back in those days, my favorite game was a vertical shooter by Data East called Zaviga. It was a shooter similar to Xevious, where you had two modes of attack used to dispatch aerial or ground-based targets. The game never became a huge hit, but I was really hooked on it.

Do you want to continue making big-budget blockbusters, or do you think you'd like to try something different that's more akin to an indie film?
I want to do both.

On one hand, I would love to work on a truly massive project bigger than anything I've done in the past—a monster like James Cameron's *Titanic* that would stretch budgets and resources to the very limit with absolutely no room for failure. But, on the other hand, I also envy the creative freedom that comes with a small team of indie developers.

An ideal scenario would be similar to the film industry, where movie directors alternate between huge blockbusters and small independent films. However, in my case, I am not a freelance creator. I am also responsible for planning things from a business perspective. That's where the difficulty comes in.

> *"Without a doubt, I prefer creating game content. If I'm no longer able to make games, I'll leave this industry."*

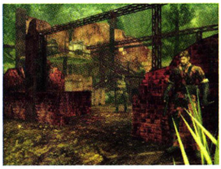
GAMEOGRAPHY

BOKTAI: THE SUN IS IN YOUR HAND
2003, GAME BOY ADVANCE
PRODUCER

LIFE
ENE
SUN

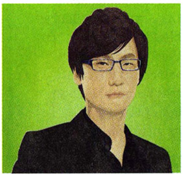
BOKTAI 2: SOLAR BOY DJANGO
2004, GAME BOY ADVANCE
PRODUCER

METAL GEAR SOLID: THE TWIN SNAKES
2004, GAMECUBE
WRITER, PRODUCER



METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER
2004, PLAYSTATION 2
DIRECTOR, WRITER, PRODUCER

Power Profiles



How has the video game industry changed during the time you've been involved with it?

In this day and age, the video games business is a major entertainment industry that surpasses movies in terms of revenue. But when I started out, it was a completely different story. Back then, the game industry was a place for people with broken dreams to gather because they couldn't land the jobs that they really wanted. Today, the industry has matured into a wonderful place where some of the most talented people in their field can take advantage of cutting-edge technology and world-class budgets to thrill and awe the entire world.

In the near future I believe we'll see the term "video game" itself vanish as our industry evolves and eventually absorbs the movie and music industries to create a larger, all-encompassing form of digital entertainment.

What aspect of creating a video game do you enjoy the most?

There are three moments in development that I always look forward to.

The first is the planning phase, where I am free to let my imagination run wild. All the work takes place inside my head, so there are no limits to what I can dream up. The possibilities are infinite.

The next moment I enjoy is when concepts and ideas that had only existed in my head begin to take shape as actual images on the screen. For the first time, I can interact with my creations in the context of an actual game and get a concrete feel for what the game will become. This is very exciting. However, the elation during this phase is usually short-lived since it is followed by a long stretch of difficult production work. It becomes a battle to balance performance, storage space, deadlines, marketability, and countless other issues. Every day is spent evaluating and re-evaluating priorities as I wrestle with decisions about what trade-offs need to be made in order to get to the finish line.

Finally, as the project nears completion, a game takes shape and we begin the process of tweaking and adjusting. This is without a doubt my favorite part of development. This is a fun time, when we start testing the game and I can enjoy seeing the reactions of testers as they play the actual game. The feedback we get during this phase gives us valuable hints as we continue to fine tune and perfect the game. It's at this point in development that I can finally see the finish line. All that's left to do is sprint straight ahead. I'm usually so excited during this phase that I can barely even sleep.

> *"In the near future I believe we'll see the term 'video game' itself vanish as our industry evolves..."*

When you're stumped by a particularly difficult problem while creating a game, what's your process for working through it?

Oddly enough, it's precisely during moments like those that my brain kicks into overdrive and I simply overflow with all kinds of unusual ideas. Implementing those ideas can be extremely difficult, but thinking of them is always easy. Whenever I run into a problem, the ideas just begin to flow. I guess you could say that's when I feel the most motivation.

What other games or game creators do you most admire or respect, and why?

Mr. Miyamoto. I don't know if I would call it admiration or respect, but if it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be who I am today. If I hadn't experienced Super Mario Bros. on the NES, I doubt I would have ever entered the game industry.

We know you're a huge movie fan. What are some of your all-time favorites and some of your recent favorites?

Regarding my all-time favorite movie, I'm afraid I can't give an answer. My favorites constantly jostle for position on a daily basis. However, if I really have to narrow it down, there are two movies that I always mention. Those would be *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Taxi Driver*. As far as recent favorites are concerned, I really enjoyed the Taiwanese film *Monga*.

Whose works in other forms of media, such as music or literature, do you most admire or enjoy?

As with movies, it's impossible to choose just one. Like movies, if it weren't for the influence of music and literature, I would not be who I am today. There's a good chance I might not have grown to be as bold as I am.

Even now, most of my energy and inspiration comes from movies, music, and literature. I guess you could say that my way of repaying my debt to society is to distill these various influences into the medium of a "game" that I can share with the world.

What is your favorite nongaming hobby or pastime?

Movies, books, and music. I make games for a living, so my free time is usually spent on these types of indoor activities. However, if I wasn't making games, I would love to take up more outdoor hobbies.

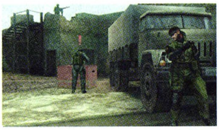
If you could have one superpower, what would it be?

It would probably be the ability to split myself into two or to slow down time. Or maybe the ability to live without sleeping. There're only 24 hours in a day and life is short. Yet there are so many things I want to accomplish in life. Nothing could make me happier than finding a way to somehow use all 24 hours in the day on creative endeavors. That's the kind of magic I want.

GAMEOGRAPHY

LUNAR KNIGHTS
2007, NINTENDO DS
PRODUCER

METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS
2008, PLAYSTATION 3
DIRECTOR, WRITER, PRODUCER



METAL GEAR SOLID: PEACE WALKER
2010, PSP
DIRECTOR, WRITER, GAME DESIGNER, PRODUCER

METAL GEAR SOLID: SNAKE EATER 3D
2011, NINTENDO 3DS
WRITER, DIRECTOR OF KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS

MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
HELLO
my name is
Chris

This is Chris, hardcore gamer. He's been playing games ever since he could grip a controller. When he was growing up, **his parents used the ESRB rating** to choose the games that were right for him. One day he'll use the ratings to **decide what games his kids play** – he just doesn't know it yet.

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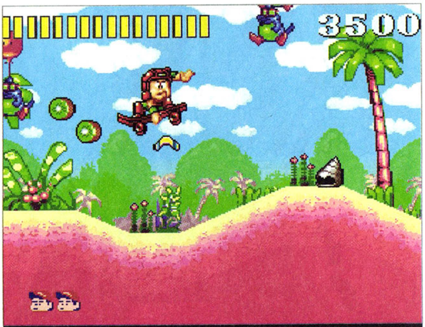
Skate and die!

SUPER ADVENTURE ISLAND
HUDSON SOFT
SUPER NINTENDO

Super Adventure Island

Forget boxers. Forget briefs. Real men wear grass skirts.

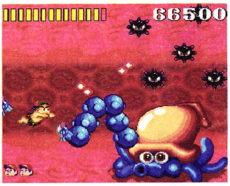
PLATFORM: **SUPER NES**
PUBLISHER: **HUDSON**
DEVELOPER: **PRODUCE**
RELEASE DATE: **APRIL 1992**
COVERED IN ISSUES: **36, 42**
KIWI FRUITS GROWING INSIDE THE STAGE 1-3 VOLCANO: **7**

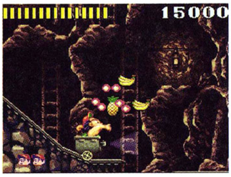


Lizard paratroopers, floating fruit, and a half-naked jungle explorer on a skateboard. Back in the early '90s, this surely made perfect sense.

In the weird old days before video game heroes were designed to be highly marketable stars, the strangest characters could wind up fronting a popular platformer. A chubby guy dressed in leaves, riding a skateboard on a desert island, throwing flaming boomerangs at vicious hermit crabs? Why not?

He turned out to be an awfully durable hero. Super Adventure Island was the third appearance of the man called Master Higgins, coming between Adventure Islands II and III for the NES. With regard to game design, Super Adventure Island represented a step backward—those two 8-bit contemporaries are actually more complex, with more weapons and power-ups to play around with—but the graphics and the jammin' Caribbean soundtrack from Yuzo Koshiro make Super Adventure Island a beautiful gallery piece.





And there's still that deadly skateboard. This was the series's original signature gimmick—run over the board and Higgins turns into an '80s skater dude, elbow pads and all. Skating through the levels is a deadly temptation, because it's a heck of a lot of fun...until you get going far too fast to survive.

Super Adventure Island had five main stages of potential jungle rash, including a couple of inspired inventions. World 2 trips through the belly of a whale à la *Pinocchio* (though, sad to say, you can't skate that one) and there's some speedy mine-cart action to buzz through in World 3.

16-bit veterans may wince recalling the challenge at every step. This is one of the heavyweights of hardcore platformer cruelty—the rhythm of the jumps demands total precision, a nasty energy limit takes away any time to strategize, and Higgins usually dies after touching a single bad guy. Anyone who can roll the credits without cheating might be slightly more than human.

Got thumbs with abilities beyond the reach of mortal men? Well, step on up and try it. Super Adventure Island is scheduled to join the Virtual Console lineup any day now. **—DAVID S.**

ALL ABOARD

Super Adventure Island protagonist Master Higgins had a decent following back in his day, but he wasn't Hudson's biggest star. If Hudson had a mascot, it was probably Bomberman. The company's eclectic history offers plenty of other candidates, though, such as the Star Soldier robot and, in the early days, a 1940s-style steam train.

In 1973, Hiroshi and Yuji Kudo were electronics buffs and railroad-train freaks. The brothers named their fledgling company, which originally sold ham-radio gear, after the "Hudson-type" C62, their favorite model of locomotive.

As the '70s became the '80s the Kudos' attention turned to computer gaming, and Hudson found a prime spot aboard the speeding bandwagon. In 1984, after Hudson became Nintendo's first third-party publisher, the company's Famicom version of Lode Runner was a million-selling smash.

Hudson's arguable heyday came a technological generation later, when it was the top purveyor of games for the TurboGrafx16. Hudson even designed the system's slimline cartridge format, later nicknamed the HuCard. Though Hudson was recently absorbed by Konami, its legacy lives on; many of the company's NES and TurboGrafx16 hits survive on Virtual Console.

HAVE A FAVORITE CLASSIC GAME YOU'D LIKE TO SEE REVISITED?
Send us your requests—we'll consider them for a future installment of Playback. nintendopower@futureus.com

REVIEWS

IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF ALL THE LATEST GAMES

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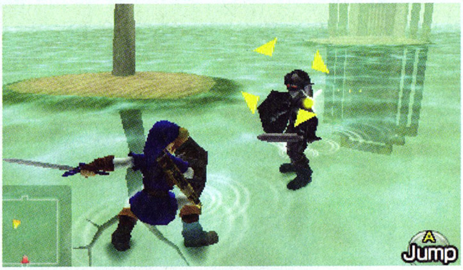
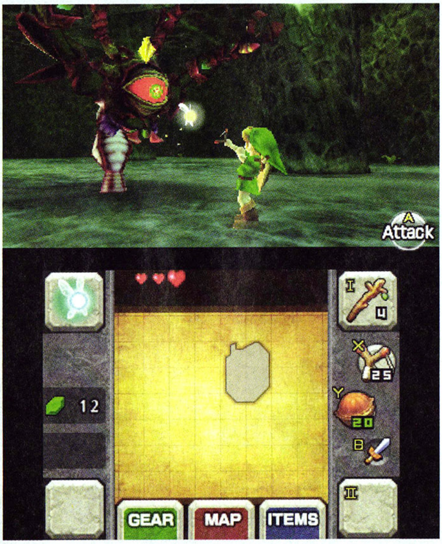
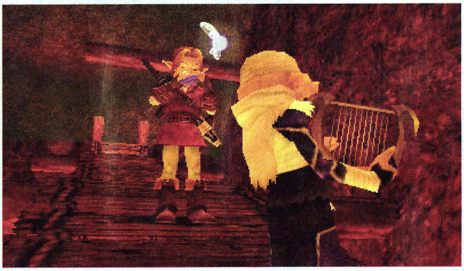
It's official: you *need* a Nintendo 3DS.







Living Up to a Legend

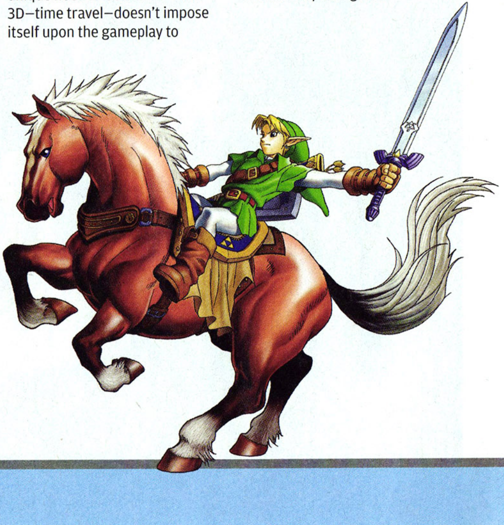
THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME 3D

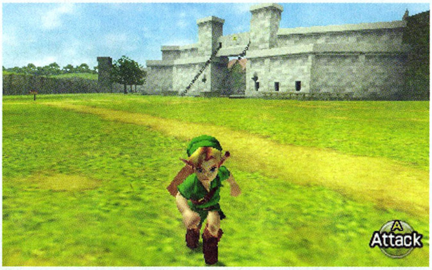
RATING: 9.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO 3DS**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO/GREZZO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Since its debut on the Nintendo 64 console 13 years ago, many gamers have considered The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time to be one of the best games ever made—if not *the* best—and with good reason. It redefined not only the Legend of Zelda series but also the entire gaming world with its pioneering approach to polygonal gameplay, and became the blueprint for modern action-adventure games. Even more significant than its many innovations were the title's well-crafted puzzles, finely tuned gameplay, and ambitious scale. It received near-universal praise and still holds the record for the all-time highest review-score average. But after sitting securely in players' fond memories for over a decade, can a remake of the classic compete with the many modern Zelda titles that have since refined the features that Ocarina of Time introduced?

Since I hadn't played Ocarina of Time since it was new in 1998, I had only vague memories of certain scenes and was therefore able to approach the remake almost as if I'd never experienced the adventure before. The core gameplay holds up impressively well; it never seems like a lesser game than what we've become accustomed to, but rather, it has a back-to-basics feel, due largely to the fact that some locations, such as towns, have fewer points of interest and are more sparsely populated than in some newer Zelda titles. But that means each location and villager matters that much more, and there's certainly no shortage of things to see and do. The back-to-basics sense is enhanced because the unique hook in Ocarina of Time 3D—time travel—doesn't impose itself upon the gameplay to the degree that similar added elements have dictated the flow of more-recent titles, so traditional Zelda game design takes center stage. If I hadn't known that Ocarina of Time 3D was a remake, it would have seemed like a slight departure from the direction the series has taken of late, but I could have believed it was a totally new game.





You played Saria's Song.

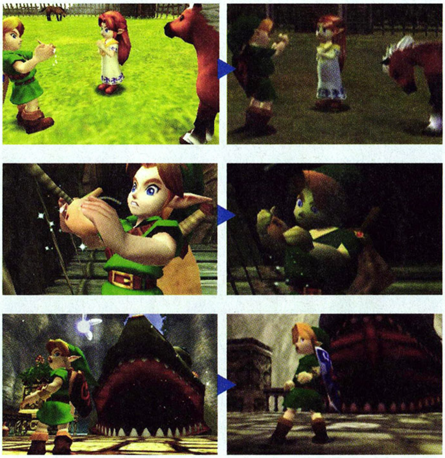
[Above] The grand expanse of Hyrule Field is a sight to behold in 3D; the effect really brings the world to life.

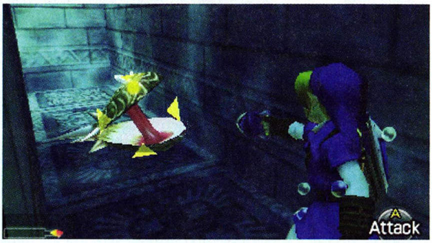
Just what is it about this episode of Link's adventures that has always made it so good? A lot of things: The action is fast and fluid thanks to the seamless use of the lock-on camera (a now-standard gaming staple that the original Ocarina of Time introduced). The back-and-forth patterns of enemy battles have a satisfying tempo and leave room for creative players to show off; skillful blocking, dodging, and counterattacking can make you feel like a badass. The aforementioned time-travel feature, by which you play as both child Link and adult Link across two different eras, is perhaps the most universally loved mechanic in a long line of hit-and-miss hooks that define each entry in the series (such as sailing in The Wind Waker, riding a train in Spirit Tracks, and the repeating three-day cycle of Majora's Mask). The graphical style, which sits between the extremes of Toon Link and Twilight Princess Link, seems to have hit the sweet spot for many fans. The game is a bit more challenging than recent Zelda titles, as the series has trended easier over time. It isn't always obvious what to do next, dungeons can really stump you, and completing the game's many side quests—such as obtaining optional items and finding and killing every Gold Skulltula—is tough and takes a long time. And while the game doesn't focus too heavily on telling a story, its tale is nonetheless well told and filled with some of the series's most memorable moments. Additionally, there's an intangible "life" to this game that is hard to put into words, but you feel it when crossing the grand expanse of Hyrule Field under a starry night sky, or when the sun rises over Lake Hylia: a sense of wonder that is at the very heart of what makes the Zelda games so great. Many of the characters, too, connect on a deeper level than normal and leave a lasting impression, such as the farm girl Malon, whose sad-yet-hopeful nighttime singing is hauntingly beautiful, and the mysterious Sheik, whose red-eyed stare always seems to hint at more than he's telling you. Finally, the music—quite possibly the best in the series thanks to the endearing Ocarina tunes—imbues the varied locations with an emotional resonance. Despite having adventured with Link in various other lands over the years, returning to this one felt like coming home.

As amazing as Ocarina of Time has always been, it's gotten substantially better on the Nintendo 3DS handheld. The improved graphics, while a notch below the showcase visuals in N3DS titles like Resident Evil: The Mercenaries and Metal Gear Solid: Snake Eater 3D, are still among the best we've seen on the system. The characters, bosses, and interior locations look especially good, and show huge advancements since the original version of the game. A much smoother frame rate also makes a big difference. But the

Now and Then

Take a look at The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D, and then—through the time-traveling magic of Link's ocarina—warp back to the N64 era to see just how far the graphics have come.

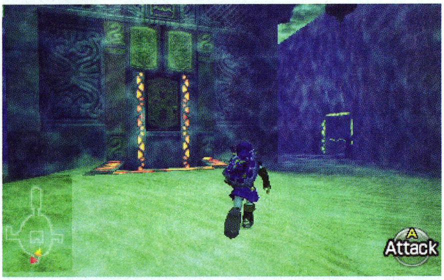


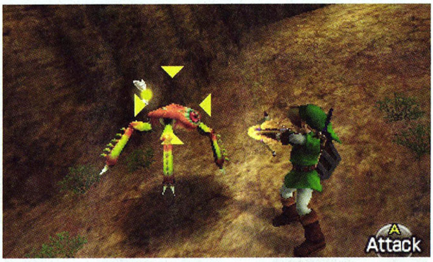


ALL SCREENSHOTS HAVE BEEN CAPTURED IN 2D MODE.

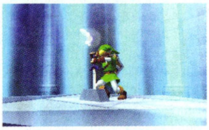
Taming the Water Temple

The notorious Water Temple has been much improved in The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D due to two key refinements. Markings now direct you to areas where the water level can be changed (a key puzzle component), and most importantly, the Iron Boots—which play a primary role in traversing the temple—are no longer a pain to put on and take off.





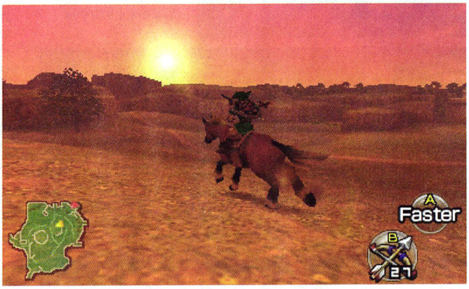
[Above] Lock-on targeting revolutionized combat control back in 1998 and works just as great today.



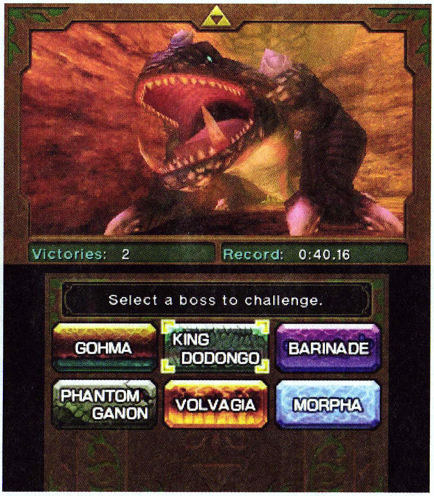
biggest enhancement by far is the addition of stereoscopic 3D. In my opinion, Ocarina of Time 3D benefits more from 3D than any other N3DS title so far. The extra dimension is a perfect fit for the wide-open spaces of Hyrule, giving the world such a solid sense of depth and reality that I can't imagine ever playing the game with the effect turned off.

Aside from its looks, the game's most notable new component is its touch-screen menu. It's a simple, straightforward addition with functionality common to many N3DS and DS games, but the instant accessibility of your inventory is a huge step up from the original N64 title, in which selecting an item, checking the map, or saving the game required a lengthy process of first pausing the action and then cycling through multiple menus. The touch screen always displays the map of the room you are currently in, and removes the clutter of Link's life bar and magic meter from the action up top. The bottom screen also features two configurable touch "buttons" so that, in combination with the Y and X Buttons, you can have a total of four items or weapons at the ready. The screen has a permanent spot for the ocarina, too, and can display the notes for a song while you play it. Saving is as simple as pressing Start or Select. These enhancements—paired with the flawless functionality of the system's Circle Pad and button layout—make the Nintendo 3DS a much better fit for Ocarina of Time than the system and controller it was originally designed for. You can even look around in first-person view by simply moving the Nintendo 3DS, thanks to the handheld's motion-sensing capabilities. This is really fun to do and allows you to quickly check your surroundings or target enemies with projectile weapons. However, unless you put the extra effort into sitting up straight, locking your arms, and turning at the waist to keep the screen perfectly positioned before your eyes, the 3D effect is easily lost. While slouching on the couch, it's more practical to use the Circle Pad.

Ocarina of Time 3D also includes refinements to the gameplay, plus considerable new modes. Tip-dispensing Sheikah Stones have been added—one in each of the two time periods; you can turn to the stones for hint movies if

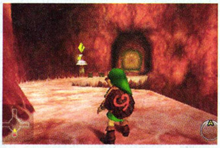


ALL SCREENSHOTS HAVE BEEN CAPTURED IN 2D MODE.

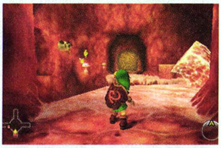


More of a Great Thing

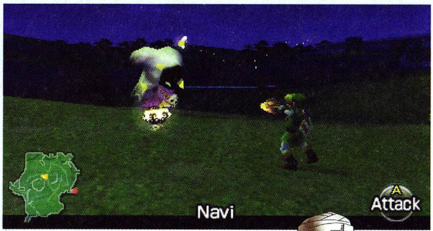
The bosses are awesome, so why fight them only once? By taking a nap in his bed, Link can relive (and you can replay) his coolest battles in his dreams. And when you think you've finally seen and done everything the game has to offer, take on the Master Quest, a remixed adventure that dramatically changes the main game.

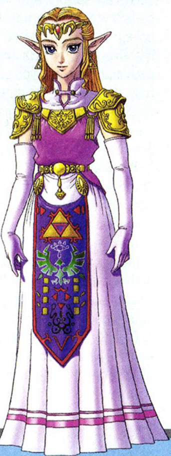


Normal Quest



Master Quest

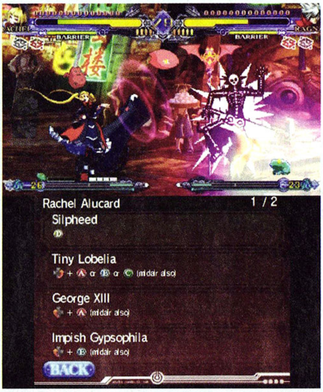




you find yourself stumped. And longtime Ocarina of Time fans will be relieved to hear that the Water Temple—infamous for its perplexing puzzles and repeated use of the Iron Boots, which required laborious cycling through menus to take on and off—is much improved. The boots can now be equipped with the touch of a button without a break in the action, and new markings clearly denote the paths that lead to stations where the water level can be changed, as well as which level the stations will change it to. The Water Temple is still very challenging, but not nearly as frustrating as it was. On top of the enormous amount of new and classic content already on offer, you can replay the boss fights—each a high point of the game—in Link's dreams by having him nap on his bed, and the game also throws in an unlockable Master Quest, a remix of the main adventure featuring a mirrored world, revamped puzzles, and redesigned dungeons.

There are so many clear improvements in the N3DS release that it's tough to quibble, but I could do without the extra comments from Link's fairy companion Navi, whose distracting alerts were already borderline annoying in the original game. While she does sometimes give useful hints, more often than not she interrupts the game to repeatedly suggest that you take a break from playing or go watch a hint movie. Turning to her for advice when I'm hopelessly stuck, only to get tips like "Keep moving!" or "This barrier is blocking the door! There must be some secret to opening it!" is like pouring salt in a wound. But this barely rates as even a complaint considering the overwhelming amount of awesomeness jam-packed into this game.

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D has renewed the classic status of the original and given the Nintendo 3DS its first defining, triple-A title. The game is a must for fans who remember the original and those who have hopped aboard the series since, and its traditional, undiluted Zelda gameplay makes it the perfect place for series newcomers to join in on the fun. —**CHRIS S.**



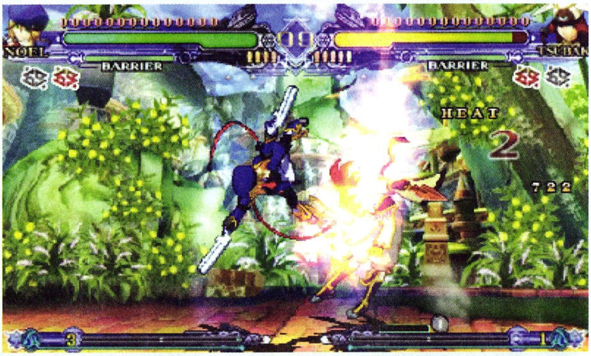
Rachel Alucard 1 / 2

Silpheed
D

Tiny Lobelia
+ A or B or C (midair also)

George XIII
+ A (midair also)

Impish Gypsophila
+ B (midair also)



The action in BlazBlue: Continuum Shift II is fast and frenetic—just the way we like it.

The Wild Blue Yonder

BLAZBLUE: CONTINUUM SHIFT II

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO 3DS**
PUBLISHER: **AKSYS GAMES**
DEVELOPER: **ARC SYSTEM WORKS**
ESRB: **TEEN**

With the releases of Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition and Dead or Alive Dimensions, the Nintendo 3DS system is quickly establishing itself as the go-to Nintendo platform for fighting games. Now a new challenger has entered the fray—BlazBlue: Continuum Shift II. And though you may not be familiar with this weirdly titled one-on-one brawler or the series from which it originates, Continuum Shift 2 is a title that fighting fans would be remiss in skipping.

I would expect no less from developer Arc System Works, who previously wowed us with the Guilty Gear series. BlazBlue shares several other similarities with that critically acclaimed fighting franchise: it has a rockin' soundtrack, a convoluted storyline, and a diverse roster of impressively drawn oddball combatants. A Gothic-Lolita vampire, a superhero ninja, a werewolf butler, a squirrel girl—these are just some of the 18 playable characters in this title.

These eccentric fellows aren't Continuum Shift II's only peculiar components—but things aren't as strange as they initially seem. Several of the gameplay mechanics appear perplexing, for example, but they are features that are commonplace in other fighting games. The Heat Gauge is essentially Street Fighter's Super Combo gauge, and the Distortion Drive is like Street Fighter's Super Combo (a powerful special move). There are, of course, unique elements that help differentiate this title from other brawlers, such as the Barrier Guard (you press back on the Control Pad and hold the weak and medium attack buttons to put up a shield) and Break Burst (you hit all four attack buttons to unleash an explosion that sends your foe flying).

Fortunately, Continuum Shift II does a good job of being welcoming to newbies. There's a fairly extensive Tutorial mode, and your character's move list is always present on the touch screen à la DOA Dimensions. (Unlike in DOA, however, you cannot tap on the move to have your combatant execute it.) If you still find the gameplay too complex, you can toggle from the standard Technical to the simplified Stylish setting. This allows you to essentially mash a couple buttons to pull off some flashy moves. Sure, it's a bit like cheating, but not nearly to the extent of SSFIV 3D Edition's Lite control scheme, as that permitted you to perform normally impossible maneuvers. You can't filter out human opponents who use Stylish controls, but it doesn't matter much; Continuum Shift II's multiplayer can be played only via local wireless, so you're usually not competing against random rivals. In the wireless matches I had against a colleague—which went off without a hitch—we agreed to play using the Technical controls.

Despite the fact that this is a game on the Nintendo 3DS handheld, it doesn't take advantage of the hardware as well as other fighters on the system do. For one, you are forced to use the Control Pad for movement. I prefer using the Control Pad in 2D fighters anyway, but having the option to use the Circle Pad would have been nice. For another, the 3D effect feels like an unnecessary addition. Because all the characters are sprites, they look like paper cutouts hovering off the background when the 3D effect is activated. It's distracting more than anything, and you can't fully appreciate Continuum Shift II's graphical splendor that way. This is not to say that the visuals are perfect when the 3D effect is disabled, however, as some of the text and button icons are rather small. Thankfully, the text is never unreadable.

Underneath all its bewildering trappings, BlazBlue: Continuum Shift II is a title that puts its own spin on the customary fighting-game concepts of yesteryear. The end result is one more excellent entry in what's become a fantastic library of brawlers for N3DS. **—JUSTIN C.**

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT GAME BOY ADVANCE GAME THAT WASN'T ON THE "A DECADE ADVANCED" FEATURE'S TOP-TEN LIST WOULD YOU HAVE ADDED TO THE LINEUP?

JUSTIN CHENG

I'm happy that the first WarioWare made it into the top ten, but I really enjoyed WarioWare: Twisted!, too. It was a nice appetizer of motion-controlled gaming.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

Mega Man Zero 2 is a fantastic game. It's as challenging as heck, but the responsive controls and crisp action allow you to push yourself to your gaming limits.

CODY MARTIN

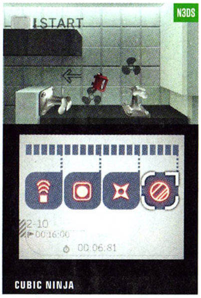
Well, if we were including ports I'd have a better answer. Unfortunately, most of the GBA games I played were ports. I'll have to check out a few of these games myself!

CHRIS SLATE

My only twinge of regret is that I couldn't convince the other NP staffers that Wario Land 4 belonged on the list. But I'm going to get started on my campaign to put Wario Land: Shake It! on our eventual list of best Wii games today!

STEVE THOMASON

I don't have a problem with any of the entries on our list, but I think an argument could be made for the inclusion of Golden Sun and/or Golden Sun: The Lost Age. Both RPGs were pretty great.



CUBIC NINJA

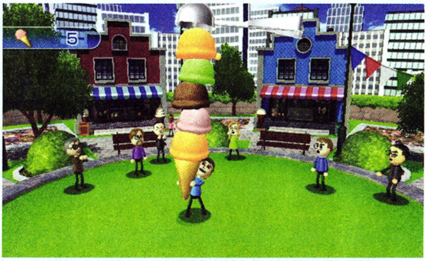
CUBIC NINJA

RATING: 4.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO 3DS**
PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **AQ INTERACTIVE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Ninjas are usually characterized by their grace and agility, but the hapless hero of Cubic Ninja clumsily flounders his way through each level, tumbling head over heels, banging into walls, and grunting like Homer Simpson. It's actually a pretty amusing premise. Unfortunately, the same can't be said for the rest of the game.

Cubic Ninja's default control scheme revolves around the Nintendo 3DS gyroscope, encouraging you to lead our free-floating protagonist through obstacle-laden environments by tilting the handheld. The motions required are so extreme, however, that you're constantly leaning forward and back or getting tied up trying to rotate the system upside down. To make matters worse, the 3D effect—which is sort of the big selling point for the system—is forcibly disabled to accommodate all that movement. There's an option for Circle Pad controls (which allows for 3D), but that only highlights the simplistic gameplay and thoroughly uninspired level design. There's just nothing clever or satisfying here; the challenge stems solely from how difficult it is to control your character. At least the game is mercifully short. There are approximately 100 levels, which sounds like a lot until you consider that the average time of completion is about a minute. **—STEVE T.**



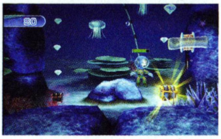
Time to Play Again

Wii PLAY: MOTION

RATING: 7.5

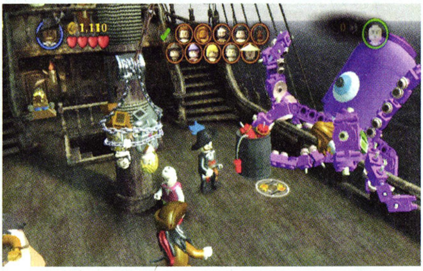
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

More intricate than your typical multiplayer minigame collection, Wii Play: Motion features 12 activities designed to demonstrate what the Wii MotionPlus accessory is capable of. And with the inclusion of multiple challenges and game variations for each activity, Wii Play: Motion showcases a surprising amount of depth not seen in the original Wii Play. The games—which come from the minds of developers such as Good-Feel, Nd Cube, and Prope—vary from delightfully simple challenges (such as balancing a giant ice-cream cone) to annoying ones (guiding an oversensitive spaceship with a confusing button scheme, for instance). One playthrough will definitely be enough for a few of the selections, but fortunately most are still fairly entertaining after the first run.



Each activity in Wii Play: Motion utilizes the Wii Remote controller creatively, and should inspire any developer that has future Wii MotionPlus support in mind. A good example is the target/UFO/ninja/dinosaur-shooting game, Trigger Twist. Instead of pointing the controller directly at the screen, your crosshairs and field of vision are influenced by the Wii Remote controller's motions. This allows you to look and turn around first-person-style, as opposed to forcing you to view the playfield from the usual shooting-gallery perspective. It's not as fun as Trigger Twist, but ghostbusting game Spooky Search also features an innovative control mechanic. In order to catch the offscreen spirits, you point your remote in the direction indicated by the onscreen Mii characters and the audio cues emitting from the remote's speaker. Once you've located a specter, you can ensnare it and drag it into your line of sight, which allows you to bust it.

Wii Play: Motion includes a slew of content. Although a few activities aren't exactly winners, the majority are fun and guaranteed to familiarize new users with the bundled Wii Remote Plus controller. **—CODY M.**



A Blocky Life for Me

LEGO PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: THE VIDEO GAME

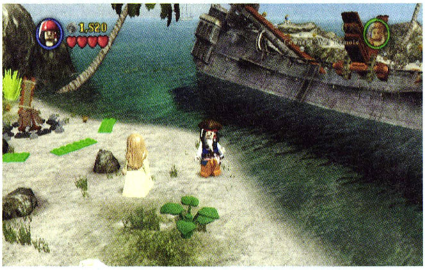
RATING: 7.0

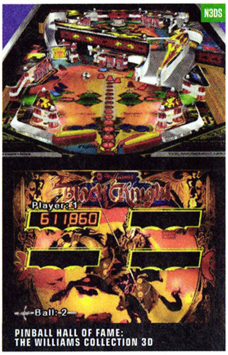
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **DISNEY INTERACTIVE**
DEVELOPER: **TRAVELLER'S TALES**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

As much as I like the LEGO games, I have to say that things are getting a little out of hand. We got LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars just two months ago, and now another blocky adventure is upon us. This time it's a family-friendly jaunt through some of the most memorable moments from the *Pirates of the Caribbean* films. (Admittedly, we're only assuming this game spotlights pivotal portions from the fourth flick, *On Stranger Tides*, as the movie has not yet made its theatrical debut as of this writing.)

This Wii game follows the LEGO formula almost to the letter with its humorous cutscenes, LEGO-ized versions of key (and many not-so-key) characters from the movies, pick-up-and-play brick-building and brick-destroying gameplay, plentiful widgets to collect, and drop-in/drop-out co-op. One welcome piratey addition is the inclusion of Captain Jack Sparrow's compass, which you can use to find buried treasures.

This title is certainly enjoyable on the whole—assuming you haven't grown weary of the LEGO formula—but LEGO Pirates of the Caribbean feels like a step backward after playing the best LEGO game yet, the aforementioned LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars. Despite not having the features that made LEGO Star Wars III feel epic (the scene-swapping segments and the real-time-strategy elements), though, LEGO Pirates of the Caribbean feels grander than it would otherwise due to the inclusion of tunes from the films' soundtracks. **—JUSTIN C.**





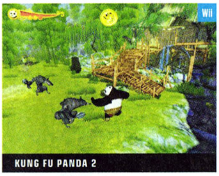
PINBALL HALL OF FAME: THE WILLIAMS COLLECTION 3D

PINBALL HALL OF FAME: THE WILLIAMS COLLECTION 3D

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO 3DS**
PUBLISHER: **CRAVE**
DEVELOPER: **FARSIGHT STUDIOS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

On one hand, Pinball Hall of Fame: The Williams Collection 3D offers authentic re-creations of seven classic pinball tables, including timeless stalwarts such as Pin-Bot, Black Knight, Whirlwind, and Funhouse. The games play great and look fantastic; the 3D visuals add an extra layer of realism that this type of game demands. On the other hand, this compilation could have been a lot more. The Wii iteration of the title, released in 2008, contained all the games found here, plus three more; the developers should have been adding tables, not removing them. The omission of Medieval Madness—which was included in the PS3 version of the collection—is especially disappointing. Taken on its own, however, the N3DS edition provides a fine way to experience the lost art of pinball. **—CHRIS H.**



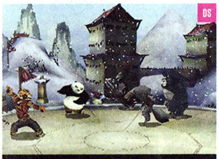
KUNG FU PANDA 2

KUNG FU PANDA 2

RATING: 2.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **GRIPTONITE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

There's absolutely no reason Kung Fu Panda 2 should require you to use THQ's uDraw GameTablet. In this action beat-'em-up starring Po, the Kung Fu Panda, you move by dragging the uDraw pen, which makes walking Po in the correct direction an unnecessary challenge. Furthermore, your attacks are limited to repeatedly flicking the pen up, down, or sideways. You also have three special attacks that are nearly impossible to execute, as they're usually misread by the uDraw GameTablet. There are no alternative controls, either, causing the already monotonous fight sequences to be arm-tiring chores. Add all of that to minimal enemy variation, poor in-game instructions, and glitchy animations, and you've got one truly awful game. **—CODY M.**



KUNG FU PANDA 2

KUNG FU PANDA 2

RATING: 4.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **GRIPTONITE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Unlike the side-scrolling action seen in previous DS-based series entries, Kung Fu Panda 2 places Po and his karate-chopping pals in turn-based battles and card-fighting clashes. Using the stylus for all actions, you'll unleash panda belly flops and speedy grasshopper attacks against rhinos, wolves, and more via menu options; and when not saving the land from enemies, you'll chat up locals for missions and collect dozens of cards for a separate minigame against friendly natives and martial-arts masters. Much as we appreciate a fresh slant on kid-friendly licensed games, this dry, menu-heavy adventure meanders and provides little momentum toward completing the lengthy quest. Only the most fervent Panda fans will bother dawdling through this sluggish RPG-inspired journey. **—ANDREW H.**

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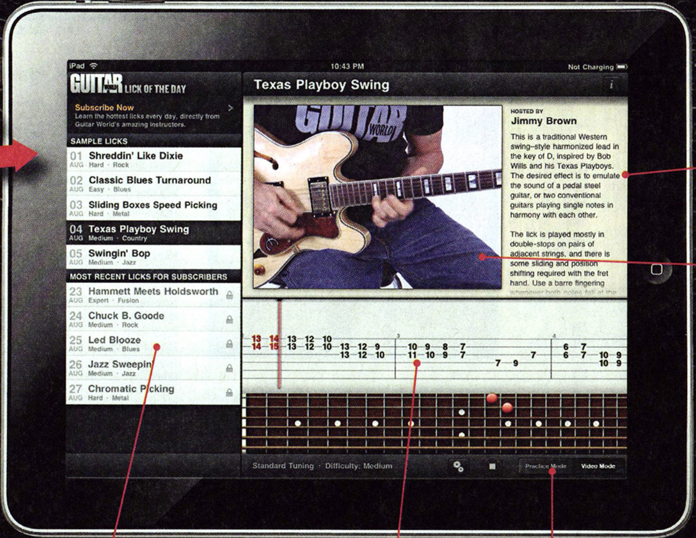

iPad 10:43 PM Not Charging

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26 Jazz Sweepin AUG Medium · Jazz
27 Chromatic Picking AUG Hard · Metal

Texas Playboy Swing

HOSTED BY
Jimmy Brown

This is a traditional Western swing-style harmonized lead in the key of D, inspired by Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys. The desired effect is to emulate the sound of a pedal steel guitar, or two conventional guitars playing single notes in harmony with each other.

The lick is played mostly in double-stops on pairs of adjacent strings, and there is some sliding and position shifting required with the fret hand. Use a barre fingering whenever both notes fall at the

Standard Tuning · Difficulty: Medium

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REVIEWS ARCHIVE

THE COMPLETE LIST OF NINTENDO POWER REVIEWS FROM THE PAST YEAR

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS

Wii

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa	6.5	Electronic Arts	254	E
All Star Karate	7.0	THQ	255	E10+
Arc Rise Fantasia	7.5	Ignition	256	T
Attack of the Movies 3D	4.0	Majesco	255	T
Batman: The Brave and the Bold: The Video Game	7.0	Warner Bros. Interactive	260	E10+
Calling	5.0	Hudson	253	T
Conduit 2	7.5	Sega	266	T
Create	5.0	Electronic Arts	262	E
de Blob 2	8.0	THQ	265	E
Deca Sports 3	4.5	Hudson	261	E
Despicable Me: The Game	4.0	D3Publisher	258	E10+
DJ Hero 2	9.0	Activision	262	T
Donkey Kong Country Returns	8.5	Nintendo	262	E
Epic Mickey	8.5	Disney	263	E
FIFA Soccer 11	8.0	Electronic Arts	260	E
FlingSmash	7.5	Nintendo	261	E
Flip's Twisted World	6.0	Majesco	260	E
Fragile Dreams: Farewell Ruins of the Moon	5.5	XSEED	253	T
GoldenEye 007	8.5	Activision	262	T
Green Day: Rock Band	8.0	MTV	256	T
Guilty Party	7.0	Disney	259	E
Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock	8.0	MTV	261	T
Gunblade NY & LA Machineguns Arcade Hits Pack	5.5	Sega	259	T
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows–Part 1	4.0	Electronic Arts	262	T
Iron Man 2	4.0	Sega	256	T
Ivy the Kiwi?	7.5	XSEED	259	E
Kirby's Epic Yarn	8.5	Nintendo	261	E
The Last Airbender	6.0	THQ	257	T
LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1-4	7.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	257	E10+
LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	8.0	LucasArts	266	E10+
Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole	4.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	260	E10+
The Lord of the Rings: Aragorn's Quest	5.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	260	T
Lost In Shadow	8.0	Hudson	263	E10+
Madden NFL 11	8.5	Electronic Arts	258	E
Major League Baseball 2K10	7.0	2K Sports	253	E
Mario Sports Mix	8.0	Nintendo	264	E
Metroid: Other M	8.5	Nintendo	259	T
Michael Jackson: The Experience	6.5	Ubisoft	262	E10+
Monster Hunter Tri	9.0	Capcom	254	T
MySims Skyheroes	7.5	Electronic Arts	260	E10+
Namco Museum Megamix	5.0	Namco Bandai	261	E
Naruto Shippuden: Dragon Blade Chronicles	4.5	Tomy	262	E10+
NBA 2K11	6.5	2K Sports	261	E
NBA Jam	9.0	Electronic Arts	260	E
NHL Slapshot	6.0	Electronic Arts	259	E
Pac-Man Party	4.5	Namco Bandai	262	E10+
Pirates Plundarrr	4.0	Majesco	255	E10+
PokéPark Wii: Pikachu's Adventure	7.5	Nintendo	261	E
Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	8.0	Ubisoft	255	T
Racquet Sports	6.5	Ubisoft	253	E
Rango	5.0	Paramount	266	E10+
Raving Rabbids Travel In Time	6.5	Ubisoft	262	E10+
Red Steel 2	8.0	Ubisoft	254	T
Rio	4.0	THQ	267	E
Rock Band 3	9.0	MTV	261	T
Sakura Wars: So Long, My Love	7.5	NIS America	253	T
Sam & Max: Beyond Time and Space	8.0	Atari	255	T
Samurai Warriors 3	6.0	Nintendo	260	T
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	7.0	Capcom	261	T
Sid Meier's Pirates!	8.5	2K Games	260	E10+
Sin and Punishment: Star Successor	9.0	Nintendo	257	T
Sonic Colors	9.0	Sega	261	E
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	8.0	Activision	260	T
SpongeBob SquigglePants	7.0	THQ	266	E
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	8.0	LucasArts	261	T
Super Mario All-Stars	9.0	Nintendo	263	E
Super Mario Galaxy 2	9.5	Nintendo	256	E
Swords	5.0	Majesco	260	T
Thor: God of Thunder	5.5	Sega	267	T
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	9.0	Electronic Arts	256	E
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 12: The Masters	8.5	Electronic Arts	266	E
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	6.0	Ubisoft	262	T
Top Spin 4	7.0	2K Sports	266	E
Tournament of Legends	7.0	Sega	257	T
Toy Story 3: The Video Game	7.5	Disney	257	E10+
Transformers: Cybertron Adventures	5.0	Activision	258	T
Trauma Team	8.0	Atlus	255	T
TRON: Evolution–Battle Grids	6.5	Disney	263	E10+
Virtua Tennis 4	8.0	Sega	267	E
Wii Party	7.5	Nintendo	260	E
Worms: Battle Islands	7.0	THQ	264	E10+
WWE All Stars	6.5	THQ	266	T
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2011	7.5	THQ	262	T

MORE ON:

SPONGEBOB SQUIGGLEPANTS

When I reviewed SpongeBob SquigglePants for Wii, I originally complained about the sound level fluctuating dramatically—in particular, the game's host, Patchy the Pirate, was almost inaudible unless you cranked up the volume. It doesn't affect the review score, but it's important to note that Patchy the Pirate's, um, *patchy* sound quality has been fixed in the final retail version. —CODY M.

Nester
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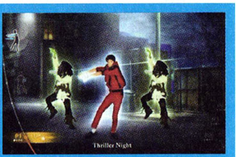
Nintendo DS

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Again	7.0	Tecmo Koei	253	T
Atari's Greatest Hits Vol. 1	5.0	Atari	261	E

MORE ON:

MICHAEL JACKSON: THE EXPERIENCE



I'm not sure what annoyed me more: the fact that you're supposed to play this game by mimicking every move of a virtual Michael Jackson (which is nearly impossible unless you're a pro dancer) or the fact that no matter how poorly you do, you can't lose. And then there's the complete omission of a singing mode; this feels like only half the experience to me. I'm sticking to the DS version. —CHRIS H.

ATV Wild Ride	**7.0**	Destineer	264	E
Beat City	**8.5**	THQ	254	E
Blue Dragon: Awakened Shadow	**7.5**	D3Publisher	256	E10+
Crafting Mama	**7.0**	Majesco	261	E
Crime Scene	**5.0**	SouthPeak	253	M
Dawn of Heroes	**7.5**	Majesco	253	E10+
de Blob 2	**8.0**	THQ	265	E
Deca Sports DS	**5.5**	Hudson	253	E
Dementium II	**8.0**	SouthPeak	255	M
Despicable Me: The Game–Minion Mayhem	**7.0**	D3Publisher	258	E
Dragon Ball: Origins 2	**8.0**	Namco Bandai	256	T
Dragon Quest VI: Realms of Revelation	**7.5**	Nintendo	265	T
Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies	**9.0**	Nintendo	257	E10+
Etrian Odyssey III: The Drowned City	**8.5**	Altus	260	E10+
Final Fantasy: The 4 Heroes of Light	**8.0**	Square Enix	260	E10+
Ghost Trick: Phantom Detective	**9.0**	Capcom	263	T
Giana Sisters DS	**9.0**	Destineer	265	E
Golden Sun: Dark Dawn	**8.0**	Nintendo	262	E10+
Harvest Moon: Grand Bazaar	**6.0**	Natsume	258	E
Infinite Space	**8.0**	Sega	253	T
Iron Man 2	**6.5**	Sega	256	E10+
Ivy the Kiwi?	**7.0**	XSEED	259	E
Kingdom Hearts Re:coded	**8.0**	Square Enix	263	E10+
The Last Airbender	**7.5**	THQ	257	E10+
LEGO Battles: Ninjago	**7.5**	Warner Bros.	267	E
LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	**8.0**	LucasArts	266	E
Lufia : Curse of the Sinistrals	**8.0**	Natsume	260	E10+
Mario vs. Donkey Kong: Mini-Land Mayhem!	**7.5**	Nintendo	262	E
Mega Man Zero Collection	**9.0**	Capcom	256	E
Monster Tale	**8.0**	Majesco	265	E
Naruto Shippuden: Naruto vs. Sasuke	**5.0**	Tomy	262	E10+
Naruto Shippuden: Shinobi Rumble	**6.0**	Tomy	264	T
Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors	**9.0**	Aksys	262	M
Okamiden	**8.0**	Capcom	265	E10+
Picross 3D	**7.5**	Nintendo	255	E
Plants vs. Zombies	**9.0**	PopCap	264	E10+
Pokémon Black and Pokémon White Versions	**9.0**	Nintendo	265	E
Pokémon HeartGold and Pokémon SoulSilver Versions	**9.5**	Nintendo	253	E
Pokémon Ranger: Guardian Signs	**7.0**	Nintendo	260	E
Professor Layton and the Unwound Future	**9.0**	Nintendo	260	E10+
Puzzle Quest 2	**7.5**	D3Publisher	257	E10+
Radiant Historia	**8.5**	Atlus	265	E10+
Rango	**7.0**	Paramount	266	E
Rio	**5.5**	THQ	267	E
River City Soccer Hooligans	**7.0**	Aksys	256	T
River City Super Sports Challenge	**6.0**	Aksys	258	T
Rooms: The Main Building	**7.0**	Hudson	253	E
Rune Factory 3: A Fantasy Harvest Moon	**8.5**	Natsume	262	E
Shin Megami Tensei: Strange Journey	**8.0**	Atlus	253	M
Sonic Colors	**7.5**	Sega	261	E
Sonic Classic Collection	**7.0**	Sega	253	E
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	**7.0**	Activision	260	E10+
Squishy Tank	**8.0**	Natsume	253	E
Super Scribblenauts	**8.5**	Warner Bros. Interactive	261	E
Tetris Party Deluxe	**8.5**	Majesco	256	E
Thor: God of Thunder	**6.0**	Sega	267	E10+
Transformers: War for Cybertron	**7.0**	Activision	258	E10+
TRON: Evolution	**6.5**	Disney	263	E10+
WarioWare D.I.Y.	**8.5**	Nintendo	253	E

Nintendo 3DS

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Asphalt 3D	**6.0**	Ubisoft	266	E10+
Cartoon Network Punch Time Explosion	**7.0**	Crave	267	E10+
Dead or Alive Dimensions	**9.0**	Tecmo Koei	267	T
LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	**8.5**	LucasArts	266	E10+
Madden NFL Football	**6.0**	Electronic Arts	266	E
nintendogs + cats	**7.5**	Nintendo	266	E
Pilotwings Resort	**8.0**	Nintendo	266	E
Rabbids Travel in Time 3D	**6.5**	Ubisoft	267	E
Rayman 3D	**8.0**	Ubisoft	266	E
Ridge Racer 3D	**8.0**	Namco Bandai	266	E
Samurai Warriors: Chronicles	**7.0**	Tecmo Koei	266	T
The Sims 3	**7.0**	Electronic Arts	266	T
SpongeBob SquigglePants	**7.5**	THQ	267	E
Steel Diver	**8.0**	Nintendo	266	E10+
Super Monkey Ball 3D	**7.5**	Sega	266	E
Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition	**9.0**	Capcom	266	T
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Shadow Wars	**8.0**	Ubisoft	266	T
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell 3D	**5.5**	Ubisoft	267	T

MORE ON:

LEGO STAR WARS III: THE CLONE WARS

Yes, the gameplay hasn't changed much since the last handheld LEGO Star Wars title, but the graphics have gotten a significant upgrade. In fact, LEGO Star Wars III for Nintendo 3DS is the best-looking version of the game on any Nintendo platform. Unfortunately, it has the longest loading times, too. —JUSTIN C.

MORE ON:

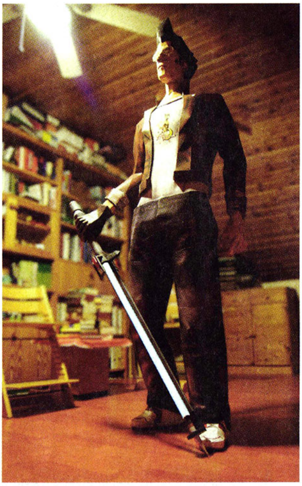
PILOTWINGS RESORT

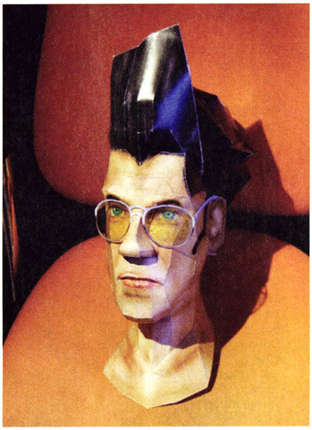
You can rush through this game in a couple of hours by meeting its minimum requirements, but you can clock in over 30 hours if you aim to master every challenge. If you passed on Pilotwings Resort because you heard that it was short, do yourself a favor and give this fantastic flying game another look. —CHRIS S.

0:59
47 MPH
SPEED
669'
ALTITUDE

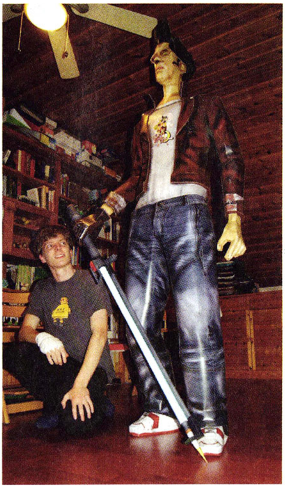
ALL SCREENSHOTS HAVE BEEN CAPTURED IN 2D MODE.

COMMUNITY





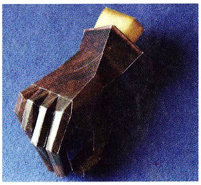
You know your abode is safe when you have a life-size Travis Touchdown guarding it.



FANDOM

Lifelike Hero

This Travis Touchdown papercraft is dangerously awesome.



That's where Luke's hand went.

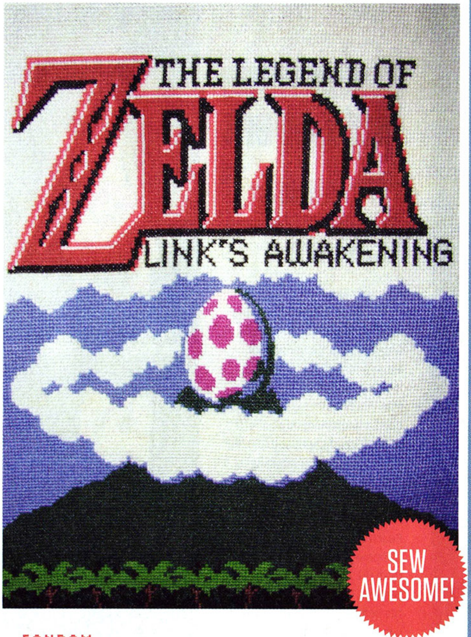
WHEN IT COMES TO video game-themed papercraft, Philipp Stollenmayer is a wizard. This 19-year-old German hobbyist blew our minds once already with his visually stunning Invisible Boo papercraft from Super Mario 64 (Vol. 250), but he's really outdone himself with his latest creation: a life-size papercraft replica of Travis Touchdown from the M-rated No More Heroes. As incredible as it is to stare down a human-scale version of the Beam Katana-wielding assassin made out of paper, the fact that Stollenmayer designed and built it completely from scratch is even more amazing. "I think No More Heroes is a model Wii-exclusive game with so much passion," he notes, adding he's glad the game was popular enough to spawn a sequel despite not selling as well as some less-violent Wii games.

While many papercrafters save lots of time by using computer models of popular characters pulled directly from the game, Stollenmayer elected to take a more original approach. "I didn't want to rip it from the game, because not only are the textures too small; I also wouldn't have made it from the beginning to the end," he says. "I don't like continuing someone else's work." Instead he used a variety of computer programs to craft the character model from scratch, paint on the texture details, and then break it down into smaller portions to be printed and assembled. After everything was printed out, he hand-cut each piece and glued the whole thing together. To make the Beam Katana look more realistic, he wrapped the paper in reflective tape and blue foil, which makes it appear to glow when photographed with a flash.

The entire process took about a month to complete, and Stollenmayer's favorite part was assembling it. "[It] went kind of fast. I couldn't work because I hurt my hand [but] not bad enough that I couldn't craft," he says. "I had [a lot of] free time, because most friends were working or studying."

Considering the elaborate process involved in creating and putting the life-size creation together, it's surprising that the whole project cost Stollenmayer only about $40 in materials.

—NATHAN M.



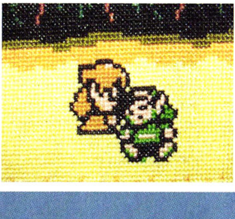
FANDOM

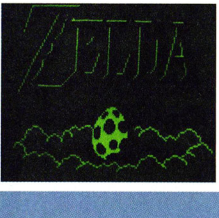
Linked by Stitches

A Game Boy classic gets the cross-stitch treatment.

WANT TO SEE a sure sign of dedication? Just check out this excellent cross-stitched re-creation of the title sequence from The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening DX, which was painstakingly modeled after the actual thing and even includes some neat glow-in-the-dark accents. Ariel Taylor, a 20-year-old student from Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, created the project (with some last-minute help from her mother, Susan) as a gift for her brother, Josh, and spent more than a year assembling it.

Taylor kept the project under wraps the entire time, and estimates spending some 240 hours on the artwork before finally presenting it to the lucky recipient last Christmas. "He was incredibly impressed by it, and it now hangs proudly in his room by his computer," she explains. "All of his roommates were floored by it, and one even wanted one for himself!" The roommate will have to wait, though: next up for Ariel are a cross-stitch of Link's horse, Epona, as well as a crocheted scarf based on Level 1-1 from Super Mario Bros. —**ANDREW H.**





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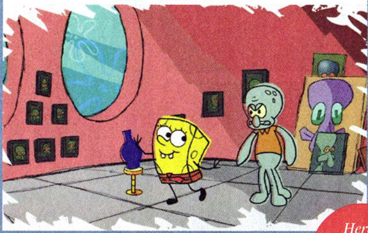
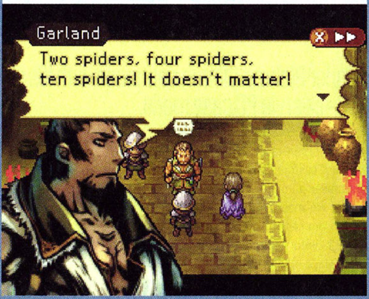
THIS MONTH'S SHOT



I told you, SpongeBob, you only get *three* wishes!

Here's our caption. THINK YOU CAN DO BETTER?

VOLUME 266'S SHOT



Garland

Two spiders, four spiders, ten spiders! It doesn't matter!

"If you think that doesn't matter, you might want to look up at the ceiling. I count at least one hundred more. And they don't look friendly." —**TIM C.**

"You have to have *Nintendo DSi points* if you want to download this game." —**ANDREW_ED**

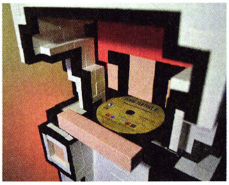
"Garland instantly regretted that comment, as he had just remembered that parrots did not eat spiders." —**CHAOS CONTROLLER**

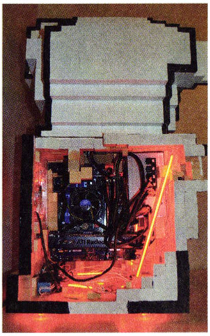
"That's still no excuse for spilling your curds and whey!" —**KT THE HEDGEHOG**

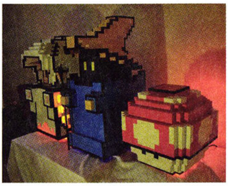
"Um...Garland? Those weren't spiders; those were your toes." —**ESKIMOJG**

ABOVE *and* BEYOND

Got art, cosplay, case mods, etc.? Send them to us via email to **community@nintendopower.com** or via snail mail to Nintendo Power/Community c/o Future US, 4000 Shoreline Court, STE 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. We'll print the best stuff!







[Left] An impressive collection.

MOD JOB

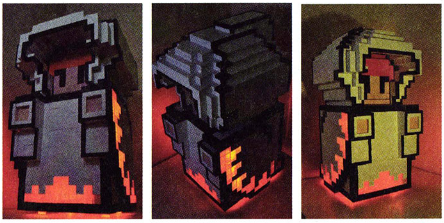
A Magical Concoction

Reader Richard Clinton continues with his series of 8-bit-style PC case mods.

READER RICHARD CLINTON has established his own little niche in the world of custom computer case mods, creating 8-bit-styled re-creations of familiar gaming icons using hundreds and hundreds of small wooden cubes. We most recently spotlighted his work in Vol. 257 with a Super Mushroom case inspired by the Super Mario power-up, but for his latest project Clinton returned to his roots to craft a counterpart to the fantastic Black Mage mod featured in Vol. 240.

His interpretation of the White Mage from the older Final Fantasy games is more than just an impressive tribute, as the case houses a fully functional computer, with the mouth serving as the DVD drive. As with his previous creations, the 24-year-old boiler operator from Boardman, Ohio, began with a pile of 2,000 one-inch wooden cubes. Acrylic cubes were also used in key areas to assist with the impressive lighting effects, and Clinton enlisted the help of his artist girlfriend to tackle the painting part of the project.

The White Mage was completed after about two months of steady work, and about $200 were spent on the blocks and paint. Clinton intends to make one new mod a year, and is considering a Chocobo (from Final Fantasy) or Legend of Zelda case next, but he says his dream project is a Metroid case made entirely from acrylic blocks. Chase that dream, Richard! **—ANDREW H.**



If only our own computers looked as awesome as reader Richard Clinton's.

FANDOM

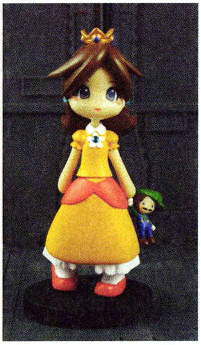
Homemade Makeovers

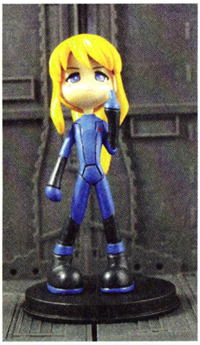
A fresh new look at some of Nintendo's leading ladies

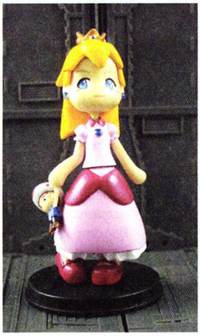
WE LAST MARVELED at reader Donald Kennedy's figure customization skills in Vol. 267, where his robotic versions of Mario and Yoshi—along with a look at the anatomy of Mega Man—demonstrated his ability to bring a harder-edged aesthetic to traditionally light and colorful characters. But versatility is clearly one of Kennedy's strong suits, as evidenced by these wonderful interpretations of Peach and Daisy from the Mario franchise, as well as Samus from the Metroid series. These versions have a style that pushes the beloved characters' cartoon-like aesthetic further than it's ever been in a game.

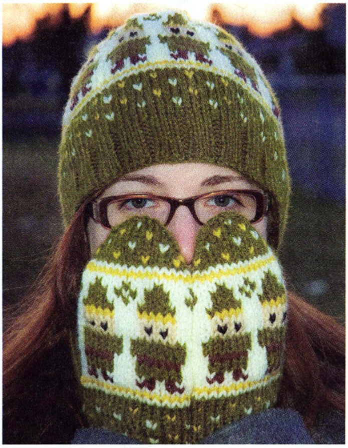
Each custom figure is primarily composed of parts from figures in the Pinky Street line of Japanese toys, which utilize interchangeable pieces. Kennedy got into the figures thanks to a series of them based on the *Neon Genesis Evangelion* anime series, and after collecting several of the toys he decided to concoct his own stylized tributes to Nintendo's leading ladies. But rather than simply arrange plastic body parts and clothing to approximate the look of each character, he sculpted the parts to perfectly match his intended look, turning all three into truly original interpretations.

Kennedy says sculpting each part to meet his specifications took the most time, especially with Samus, as he decided to create her form-fitting Zero Suit outfit. "The interesting thing about Samus was that her body was way too thin to hold up the giant head, so I had to drill a wire into the body to keep the head up," he shares. A glossy coat of paint that matches the characters' traditional colors capped off each 10-to-15-hour project to truly bring each character to life, resulting in a custom line of figures that even the most macho Nintendo fan would be proud to admire. More of Kennedy's colorful creations can be found at http://kodykoala.com. **—ANDREW H.**









This is further proof that Link is always fashionable.

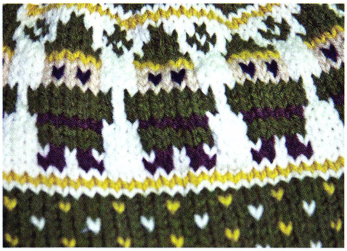
FANDOM

Warm Feelings

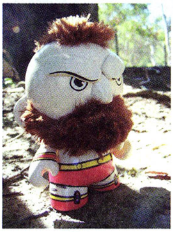
Wear your Link love with pride!

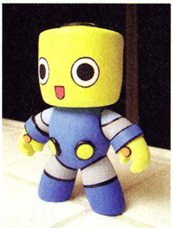
CANADIAN WINTERS can be extremely bitter, but Marie-Hélène Sirois—a 25-year-old college student from Gatineau, Quebec—found a clever way to combat the cold while showing off her love for the Legend of Zelda games. The result is this sharp hat-and-mittens set, which she initially created for another person as part of a Zelda-themed swap on a crafting website she frequents. "She told me that she could use a hat," Sirois tells us. "Her favorite character is Link, so I wanted to incorporate him, but I also wanted it to be original."

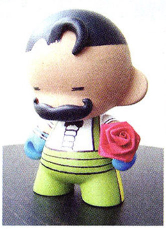
But once Sirois finished the project and sent off the items, she realized that she wanted a set for herself and made an identical hat and mittens, shown in these photos. This Zelda fan frequently crochets, quilts, knits, and cross-stitches various crafts between her studies, and we look forward to seeing more of her creations. **—ANDREW H.**



PHOTOGRAPHS BY SÉBASTIEN CÔTÉ-DINELLE







FANDOM

Make Mine Munny!

Blank vinyl toys get turned into gaming favorites.

KIDROBOT'S LINE of customizable Munny vinyl figures has helped unlock creativity in scads of would-be toy designers, letting them use markers, paint, sculpting clay, and all sorts of other tools to unearth impressive, one-of-a-kind creations. Shelby Goad, one creator of these fine custom figures, tells us her affinity for the vinyl toys began with a thoughtful Christmas gift a few years back.

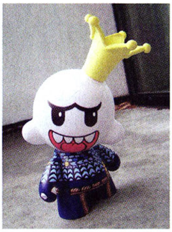
"I absolutely fell in love," says Goad. "I spent all of Christmas day and night coming up with my design and carrying it out. I bought another one almost immediately after I was finished."

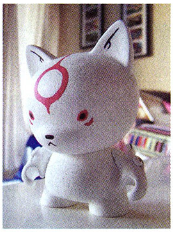
The San Francisco Bay Area-based community manager has since created more than 20 other distinct Munny figures using the standard seven-inch model, including video game characters such as Zangief and Dudley from the Street Fighter series, Link from The Legend of Zelda, Amaterasu from Okami, and King Boo from Luigi's Mansion. She also designed a Servbot (from Mega Man) using a Mighty Mugg action figure.

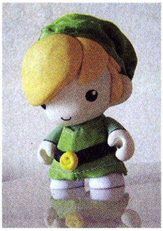
However, as evidenced by these photos, Goad goes well beyond simply drawing details atop the existing Munny form; she adds such elements as sculpted hair and a cloth tunic for Link, Zangief's fuzzy mohawk and beard, and a sculpted crown for King Boo. Realizing her vision for each figure is typically a multistep process. "I usually start out sketching out different views of the design I'd like to paint or sculpt, and then move on to sketching on the toy," she reveals. "After that, I begin sculpting or painting with acrylics—I like to use a Sharpie for details—and then I finish it off with a matte coat."

Goad says she may spend between one night and six months on a project, but inspiration can strike in funny ways. "Something usually just clicks and I go for it," she admits. "I decided to customize the King Boo because one day I noticed that a Munny's head [turned] backwards had the same shape as the Boos."

Sadly, Goad doesn't have any projects in the works, but claims she'd love to tackle one of the 18-inch Mega Munny toys at some point. "I'm not quite sure what I'd like to actually do with it," she says with a laugh. "Hopefully something will come to me at some point." We hope so as well! **—ANDREW H.**







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NEXT MONTH

Last year's E3 was filled with the shocking announcements of big games such as Donkey Kong Country Returns, Kirby's Epic Yarn, GoldenEye 007, and Kid Icarus: Uprising—what surprises do you figure are in store for this year's show? With a new Nintendo console and the next wave of Nintendo 3DS games guaranteed to be there, you can't afford to miss our full report!

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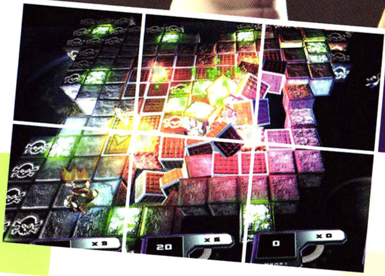

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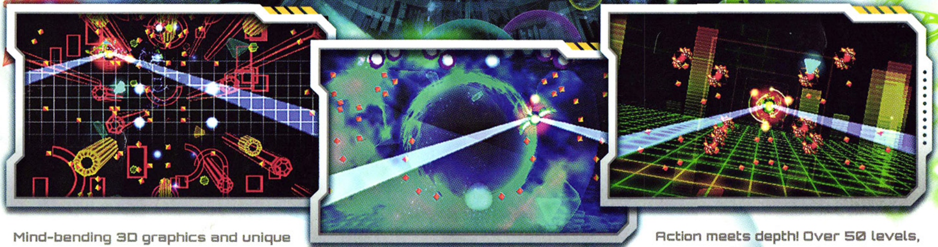

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